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HINTON'S  
THEOLOGICAL WORKS

IN SIX VOLUMES.



THE  
THEOLOGICAL WORKS

OF THE REV.

JOHN HOWARD HINTON, M.A.

In Six Volumes.

VOLUME VI.

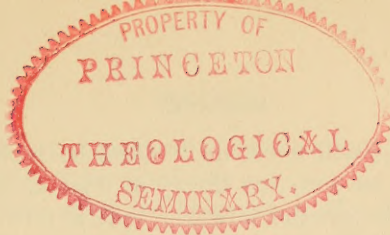
LECTURES, SERMONS, AND CONTROVERSY.

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1865.





## PREFACE TO VOLUME VI.

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IN the few lines which appeared as the General Preface in the First Volume of this Work, I expressed (what I sincerely felt) a sense of the solemnity of my position as a voluminous theological writer. What I felt seriously then I feel much more deeply now, that the last of six volumes is issuing from the press.

This sense of solemnity may well be deepened by a recollection of the early age at which I commenced authorship. The first edition of my Theology was published in the year 1827, when I was but thirty-six years of age—an early period of life, it may be thought, for writing on a class of subjects which demand not only a well-furnished mind, but a mature judgment. My system, however (if I may be allowed the expression), was not then new to me; I had arrived at it, not only at the earliest period of my ministry, but in my earliest experience of religion. My father (whose memory I justly revere) was a Moderate Calvinist of the Andrew Fuller type; and I recollect well, while my entrance on the ministry was yet under consideration, reading to him the plan of a sermon on Mark vi. 12: "They went out, and preached that men should repent." I noticed, in the first place, the things implied: as, first, that men were sinners; and, secondly, that they were *able to repent*. I seem to see at this moment the genial laugh into which he broke out, as he exclaimed, "Ah!



boy, boy, that will never do!" And he proceeded to indoctrinate me into the theory of "moral inability." I then took the ground, however, that, as unwillingness did not constitute inability, and that, as calling it so, even with the qualifying term *moral*, was liable to be misunderstood, I would discard the phrase, and uniformly speak of man as *able* to do his duty. I have done so ever since. And now, that for more than half a century I have been a professor of religion, for nearly half a century a teacher of it, and for nearly forty years an argumentative writer on it, I have to confess, or rather to affirm, that my theological system is in this, and in all its leading features, unchanged.

I might, after so extended a period, have had to look back on some of my earlier writings with regret, and to retract, or materially to qualify, some of my less mature statements. I might have gone from the new ground which I ventured to occupy, as some who differed from me warned me I should, into the regions beyond, and have been led to the abandonment of important Gospel truth. Most sincerely do I thank God that neither of these issues has been permitted to arise. In preparing these volumes for the press some matter for revision, of course, I have found, but I have no material statement to revoke, or to modify; and the views maintained in my earliest theological writings I can commend to the reception of my readers now, as stamped with all such authority as an advanced period of life, and a long course both of scriptural study and of ministerial experience, can attach to them. I am well aware that these circumstances are far from constituting a demonstration that my opinions are true; but they may fairly encourage, both my hope that they

are so, and my confidence in commending them to the consideration of my brethren.

It has been made an objection to the views I have advocated that they constitute a natural steppingstone to opinions more decidedly erroneous.

“We are constrained to express our serious conviction,” says my reviewer in the *Gospel Herald*, “that it is from Mr. Hinton’s own stand-point in Theology that not a few have gone forward into semi-Socinian errors. . . . Taught that man *has power* of himself to believe the Gospel savingly, and that the *Gospel* is the instrument of God’s moral government, they have proceeded to deny any necessity for the Holy Spirit’s work in regeneration, and have merged the moral government of God in a merely paternal mode of dealing with his erring children, and have declared themselves justified morally and logically in so doing.”

I am undoubtedly sorry if the opinion which the reviewer here expresses represents a fact. Even if it does so, however, it is a fact for which I am not responsible, and which contains no argument. Men have gone into error from all stand-points, and no man is safe at any stand-point unless God keep him. The only real question is, Is Moderate Calvinism, as a system, scripturally true? If it be, my counsel is, Hold it, and look to God to keep you. It would be a poor apology for maintaining erroneous views that, in doing so, you were less likely to fall into error. Of all stand-points, we may depend upon it that THE TRUEST IS THE SAFEST.

It is to me passing strange, however, that any man should proceed to deny “any necessity for the Holy Spirit’s work,” because it is proved to him that he “has power of himself to believe the Gospel savingly,” when at the same time it is demonstrated to him that, although he can, he will not. Does, then, this deep, and practically prevalent, aversion of his heart require

no overcoming power? Or will it yield to any power but that of the Holy Spirit? No man, I think, can logically deny the necessity of the Holy Spirit's influence, until he has learned to believe—what assuredly I have never taught—that he is of himself, not only *able* to believe unto salvation, but *willing*, also.

The allegation that I have affirmed “the Gospel to be *the* instrument of God's moral government” is unfounded and untrue, as a reference to the passages referred to by my reviewer would immediately show. What I have asserted is that the Gospel is *an* instrument of God's moral government—one, indeed, of several; the covenant of Eden being the first, the moral law the second, and the Gospel the third. Such a view, it is evident, can by no logical process lead to an exclusively paternal view of the divine administration.

With what actual effect I have written it is not for me either to judge, or to conjecture. I thank God if he has given me grace to speak in Christian sincerity, and I thank my brethren for the Christian kindness with which they have listened to me. For the rest, it is enough for me that THE TRUTH OF GOD WILL LIVE.

It has not escaped my observation, however, that, among critics who agree in their hostility to my doctrinal views, a wide diversity of opinion exists as to the practical influence of my writings. My reviewer in the *Gospel Herald*, speaking of THEOLOGY, says it is a work which, “together with subsequent volumes by the same author, has done more to mould the rising ministry of the denomination than any other influence that could be named.”

An opinion diametrically opposite to this, on the other hand, has been expressed by my reviewer in the

*Primitive Church Magazine.* Referring to my "divinity system," he says:—

"Since the first appearance of this 'Moderate Calvinism' in the pages of the *Oxford Encyclopedia*, now some forty years ago, down to the present day, it has secured no considerable sympathy, created no party, and formed but few isolated friendships. We by no means agree with a respected contemporary that 'Mr. Hinton's writings' have produced anything like *permanent* effects. For a short time the system attracted attention on the score of novelty; but there was found to be about it so much that unsettled, and so little that confirmed, the average faith of the churches, that it was speedily laid aside, and almost forgotten. We seriously question whether there is a man in the three kingdoms who has read Mr. Hinton's *Theology* a second time. It has already had its day; and though its author may administer a few kind stimulants to restore an impossible animation, it is doomed, like its prototype, Baxterianism, to pass away, and be no more."

Which of my censors is nearest the mark let well-informed observers judge, it is not for me, of course, to express any opinion on so personal a matter; but the manner in which this edition of my *Theological Works* has been received hardly looks as though the prophecy of the latter writer would be fulfilled. I certainly am not at all sorry that I have "created no party;" this never was either my object, or my wish. Nor, indeed, was it possible; for my views are not—were not—new. The party of Moderate Calvinists—waiving for the present all reference to the evangelists and the apostles—existed long before I was born; originated in France,\* developing itself in the United States, and owning Andrew Fuller as its principal champion in England. I am but an humble follower in the train. If my controversial writings have had

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\* I make this statement on the authority of a writer in a distinguished American periodical, which I read some years ago, but the name of which I cannot now recall. The author of the system is stated to have been M. Cameron, a French Protestant minister.

any value, it is that by them I have spoken to the men of the age in which I have lived, and have thus contributed somewhat to the wider diffusion, and, perhaps, somewhat to the more distinct expression, of a theological system which I believe to be more scriptural than any other known among the churches.

For his great mercy to me in this respect I devoutly thank the God of all grace; and I commit the whole work which I am by these lines completing to the hands of my brethren, with earnest prayer that He will accept it as a not unwilling offering to his service, and render it subservient to his glory.

LONDON, *May* 29, 1865.



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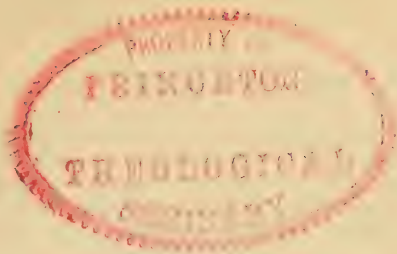
SERMONS.



## ADVERTISEMENT.

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OF the twenty Sermons here introduced only five have been published: the two preached for the Baptist Missionary Society, and three of the Funeral Sermons—that for the Revs. Dr. Yates and W. Knibb, that for Mrs. Steane, and that for the Rev. John Birt. The remaining Funeral Sermons—those for Mrs. W. Alcock, and for Mr. Benjamin Williams and his son Theophilus, were by request printed, but were not published. Of the Sermons on general subjects several have appeared in a monthly magazine—*The Church*—in which they were inserted as papers; but, since they were in point of fact Sermons, first preached and afterwards written for the magazine, I have here preserved them. A portion of the Sermons remains, with the original publication of which I may say that I had nothing to do. They are *reported* Sermons; having most, if not all of them, appeared in the *Penny Pulpit*, the proprietor of which published whatever he expected to suit his purpose, without asking any leave, or giving an opportunity for any corrections. I have so far been *forced* into print, and, in some respects, to my regret. On the one hand, I have had no choice as to the matter thus presented to the public; and, on the other hand, I have had no control over the form in which it has appeared. Evils attaching to the latter I have done what I could to remedy by a careful revision; but evils incident to the former I have been obliged to leave untouched—having, indeed, reason to be thankful that I find nothing to regret but some degree of repetition, a fault of which, if I had had a choice, however, I would not have been guilty. I have thought it better to preserve these Sermons as samples of my ordinary ministry; a light in which, while the general reader will candidly accept them, they may possess to a particular class of my readers an especial interest.



## THE AWAKENING CALL.\*

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“Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion!”—*Isaiah* lii. 1.

THESE quickening words were addressed to the ancient Israel when the purposes of divine mercy were ripening, and their captive tribes were about to re-people the desolate land. You will probably deem us guilty of no violence to the Sacred Oracle, if we consider it as applicable to the spiritual Israel, in the anticipation of those greater blessings of which all that was done of old was but an emblem and a shadow.

I need not now stay to prove that brilliant prospects are before the church, or to expatiate on the glories of the latter day; nor is it necessary here to argue the near approach of them. These are points on which there is a sufficiently general agreement among the present auditory, and, indeed, among Christian professors at large, to warrant an appeal to the heart without the prelude of an argumentative discussion. It may be presumed, too, that your hearts, as many of you as are Christians indeed, are fully prepared for such an appeal. The prospect of a renovated world and a reigning Saviour, is assuredly not one to which you are indifferent. You cannot be strangers to the holy and delightful anticipation of it; even from the vale of tears, you oftentimes look “over the gloomy hills of darkness,” watching and longing for the coming glory. Or, if it be not so with us, it is quite time that it were, and that we should all of us awake out of sleep. The voice of our returning Lord sounds in our ears, and is adapted both to arouse the dormant from their slumbers, and to quicken the watchful to action: “Awake, awake, O Zion! Put on thy strength.”

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\* Preached for the Baptist Missionary Society, at Surrey Chapel, June 16th, 1830.

We consider this address as a call to exertion—a call addressed to the whole church, and, therefore, to every member of it—to be employed in a manner tending to the accomplishment of the expected triumphs. The topics to which we shall advert are of two classes: first, those which justify it; and, secondly, those which enforce it.

I. We consider, in the first place, the considerations which justify this appeal.

1. It is obvious, in the first place, that the passage assumes *the possession of sufficient strength* for accomplishing the end designed. It was thus, in fact, with the captives of Chaldæa at the time to which the prophecy refers, since every facility was afforded them for their return, which required only the courage to brave its hardships and its perils. In like manner, we are to suppose that the friends of God are not called upon to apply themselves to the conquest of his enemies without adapted and proportionate means. We are not summoned to do anything without strength, or beyond our strength; the exhortation is simple and intelligible, “Put on *thy strength*.” Of course it will be here understood that we speak of the possession of means, or of instrumental strength, alone; and necessarily so, seeing that nothing but an instrumental agency is assigned in any case to man. As to effectual agency, “*all things are of God*.” With respect to our own province, however—that, namely, of instrumental action—our strength is ample, though the conversion of the world be the object of it.

If it were necessary to establish this sentiment, we might observe that the conversion of the world, as to the instrumental accomplishment of it, is left altogether in the hands of the church. It is committed to the saints, and no other parties are to be employed in it; a fact from which alone we might conclude that they are in possession of sufficient strength for the purpose. Where otherwise would be the wisdom, or even the safety, of such a trust?

But wherein does our strength for the reconciliation of the world consist? Strength, in all cases, is the possession of adapted and sufficient means. Now the means of converting a sinner is the truth of the Gospel, as comprehended in the Sacred Oracles. We have no means of converting a sinner but this, and, if we proceed rationally to the work, it is by some method of bringing the Gospel to bear upon his

heart and conscience; as either by the ministry of the word, the circulation of the Scriptures, familiar conversation, or otherwise. The question, therefore, whether we possess adapted and sufficient means for the conversion of sinners, resolves itself into one respecting the adaptation and sufficiency of the Word of God. *Is divine truth adapted and sufficient to this end?* To this point inspired testimony is most direct and express. See the language of David in the 19th Psalm. Hear also the apostle affirm that the Holy Scriptures *are able* to make us wise unto salvation. Matters of fact bring us to the same point; for sinners have been converted by divine truth in every age, and none have ever been turned from the error of their ways by any other means. A weapon which does its work so well can suffer no imputation on its adaptation and sufficiency. Nor upon any other ground can we suppose that it would have become the chosen weapon of the Most High; for then it must have entailed, either a disappointment of the expectations formed from it, or a necessity for the direct interference of his power to remedy a defect of his wisdom.

If any attempt should be made to invalidate or to evade this argument by referring to the necessity of divine influence, we reply that divine influence is undoubtedly necessary to give the Gospel success. But it is also necessary to give success to the use of means in every other case; whether to the speculations of the merchant, or the labours of the husbandman. If, therefore, the necessity of divine influence in order to success is to hinder us from speaking of the sufficiency of means in one case, it must also in every other; there can then be no sufficient means for anything, because God's blessing is necessary to everything. We must leave such objectors as these to invent a new vocabulary for the ordinary affairs of life; and when they have done so, we shall make no scruple in adopting it for religious uses, though, we suspect, with little advantage to their cause. In the meantime it may be enough to say, that the means of converting sinners are sufficient for that end, just in the same sense, and to the same extent, as means are sufficient to any other end; success in all cases being alike dependent on the blessing from above.

Let us put the sentiment before us to another test, by a hypothetical calculation of the effects which might probably

arise from a vigorous use of the divine Word. Of course, it is impossible to speak with precision, but it may be thought probable that every person who earnestly seeks the salvation of those around him may be blessed to the conversion of one sinner in the course of a year. Now, supposing this, and that there were at this moment but one hundred Christians in the world, all of them, and their successive converts, so labouring and so successful continually, 800,000,000 of persons, that is to say, the whole population of the heathen world, would be converted in about thirty years. But the world already contains many thousand Christians; can it be said, therefore, in the face of such a calculation, that they are inadequate to the conversion of the world? Or, if it be thought that these resources are inadequate now, how grievous a miscalculation must have been made when the same work was left in the hands of a despised and persecuted band, the number of whose names together was but one hundred and twenty!

We maintain, then, that the church is in possession of adapted and sufficient means for the conversion of the world. It needs nothing more than to bring the truth of God into close contact with the heart of man, and the expected result will follow. Now, if there be in our hands adapted and sufficient means for bringing about the universal triumphs of the Gospel, there is manifest justice in the stirring appeal by which we are roused into action. "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion!" Persons who would reply to such a call, "What is the use of telling me to labour? It is God who must do everything"—would merely subject themselves to a severe and indignant reproof, and a direct charge of making their pretended want of power a pretext for their love of sloth. Let none of us so deceive ourselves, or so insult our Lord. When, as the hosts of his warfare, he summons us to his help, he says, Here is your sword; which of us is prepared to turn upon him, and say, But is it of proper temper for the war?

2. We observe, secondly, that the text assumes, not only the possession of adequate strength, but *the fact of inadequate exertion*. It is appropriate only to a state of comparative indolence and slumber. "Awake, awake; put on thy strength!" That this was the case with the exiled tribes when the period of their restoration arrived, is well known;



but it may seem hard, perhaps, and to some incredible, that we should have any design of applying this topic to present times. There *have been* ages when the church slumbered, but these surely are long past; and, as for the present, this is pre-eminently the age of exertion and of zeal.

It is not, dear brethren, either in ignorance of what is doing, or in depreciation of it, that we speak; but, admitting that there is much to commend and to be thankful for, we may not spend the short time which is allotted to us here either in eulogy, or in thanksgiving. Neither can we now indulge in retrospection—a too favourite employment, perhaps—and put the incipient exertion of the present in flattering comparison with the sluggishness of the past. Be it so, that we do a little more than those who did nothing, are we to be everlastingly feeding our pride with this fond recollection, while, if we look at our utmost exertions in comparison with our means and our obligations, we shall find ample reason to cover ourselves with shame? If any man's heart fails him, and he wants matter of encouragement and of thankfulness, let him look at the past and he will find it; but for what other purpose should the retrospect be taken? If it should ever be lingered over with a doting fondness—not so much to say, What hath God wrought! as, What hath man wrought! not so much for adoring the Giver of all good, as for admiring the creature into whose emptiness his goodness has been poured; not so much to nerve us for mightier efforts, as to luxuriate in past and partial success—the professing world would surely become bloated with self-complacency, and so passionately fond of the sweet food to which it had been accustomed, as to be rendered, not only inaccessible to the influence of healthy stimulants, but even resentful of their application. This would be a puny, a childish, and a mischievous method, and would indicate anything rather than a vigorous grasp of the vast object before us, and the deep influence of the motives which should impel us to its attainment. At all events, congratulation is not our object now; but the much more salutary, though less pleasing, one, of showing how far the Christian body at large yet is from bringing its whole resources to bear on the accomplishment of its triumphs.

For this purpose let us first look at contributions of a pecuniary kind, in which it is obvious that the principal

efforts of this age, and the whole efforts of many individuals, consist. Duly thankful to every contributor, and not wanting, we hope, in Christian respect and kindness to any, whether contributors or not, we must yet ask whether, even in this direction, anything like the whole resources of Zion are brought forward. We know the honoured liberality of a few individuals; but why is such liberality yet an individual matter, and not general in proportion to our wealth? The eulogy of a few in this respect is the scandal of the many. When will all Christians be such that the now conspicuous few shall be lost in the crowd? We know, too, the afflictive cases in which contributions have perhaps exceeded the bounds of wisdom or of duty, though it is not quite in a millennial spirit that they are made so often a pretext for covetousness. But the cases are vastly more numerous in which contribution falls below the level of just obligation; in which it is made of a customary amount, irrespective of proportionate ability; in which it is made under worldly or personal considerations, rather than the influence of a divine law; and in which, though it is paid with easy regularity, like a tax or a rate, it would be very long in springing unsolicited from a devout and a grateful heart. Even if the actual amount of money raised at the present day were proportionate to the wealth possessed, there is about the general system of its collection something so unlike the hallowed principle and the eager forwardness of primitive times, that, if the record of it were inserted in the New Testament, it could scarcely fail of being pronounced an apocryphal chapter.

But there is another direction in which Christian activity, if consistent, might be expected to appear. We refer particularly to direct individual exertion for the salvation of souls; such as is described in the Old Testament by every man saying to his neighbour, Know the Lord; and in the New, by shining as lights in the world, holding forth the Word of life. This mode of exertion on the part of every Christian, without exception, arises naturally out of the existence of gracious character, which both creates the adaptation and supplies the motives to it. This capacity of action unquestionably holds a place among the resources which the church possesses for the advancement of its triumphs. It is not only a part, but a very important part,



of Zion's strength. We may go further, and say, that it is by far the largest and most important part of it, and that to which all else is either subordinate or inferior. To this all pecuniary contributions are manifestly subordinate; the only possible utility, and, indeed, the only design, of them being to enable some persons to do this very thing. And, as for the Word of God, which has doubtless a sufficiency, and sometimes an efficacy, apart from direct instrumentality, it is *more* adapted to produce the wished-for effects when it is associated with the force of the living voice, and the breathings of affectionate anxiety. The direct communication and personal application of divine truth, therefore, takes the precedence of all other means for the conversion of sinners. It is emphatically *Zion's strength*.

Only try the experiment. If this method alone were adopted, and every person who knows the Lord were to make only such efforts for the conversion of others as the most scrupulous prudence might sanction, what an immense multitude of instruments would immediately be brought into operation, all of them fitted for their work, and peculiarly fitted for it in their several stations, because they would bring into bearing the personal and relative influences of life. This whole amount of activity would be constant, without expense, without sacrifice, without violent effort, without exhaustion. It would in every case engage the heart, that most effectual of all methods of reaching the heart of another. The church has no capacity of magnitude and force for a moment to be compared with this. The whole missionary host does not constitute a tithe, nor the tithe of a tithe, of it; and, if the system of universal personal endeavour were but acted upon, the entire missionary apparatus of the present day, magnificent as it now seems, might be almost overlooked in the much wider and vaster activity of which it would form but an inconsiderable portion.

How can it be said with any semblance of truth, that in this respect Zion has put on her strength? We speak not of individuals, whom here we cannot stay to eulogize; we speak generally of those who may be considered as Christians indeed; and we ask, whether there are not many of them who never think of such a thing as trying to convert a sinner; who are so much strangers to the obligation of it,

that they stand in vacant wonder when it is pressed upon them; and so dead to all the motives to it, that they give utterance to nothing in reply but evasions and excuses? This is undeniably the case to an immense extent in the domestic circle, where every facility exists for such endeavours; and yet more extensively in the sphere of relations, acquaintances, and neighbours, who seem to be as quietly left as though their courses of sin were only different ways of going to heaven. The great exertions of this age are made upon a principle which tends to paralyze the principal aggressive force of Christianity. Everything, or almost everything, is to be done by societies. But the strength of the church does not lie in societies. It would be of no advantage if there were a society, with all its officers, for the conversion of every house, any further than the force of individual character was brought into bearing; and, if this could be otherwise secured, the machinery of societies were much better dispensed with. A great part of what is done by Mr. Secretary, Mr. Treasurer, the committee, and the collectors, is just so much withdrawn from what the same persons might do in their single capacity, if those whom they have to stimulate would but be active without them. The complicated movements of public bodies, which constitute so large a part of the efforts of the present age, and occupy so large a space in the public eye, instead of being of any intrinsic value, are an indication that the force of character is too feeble to act without such artificial help, and a deduction of a very large percentage from the resources which are available for the conversion of the world. The thing of principal value is that every man should be at his post, and effectively discharging his particular duty, by labouring vigorously for the conversion of those to whom he has access. The strength of Zion lies in the many thousand hearts which love her Lord, and the many thousand tongues which are fitted to plead his cause. A society, for the most part, is a scheme in which a great many Christians give their money to enable some to plead for God while the rest are silent, and as an apology for their silence. It opens the mouths of the few, and shuts those of the many; and thus, upon the whole, while so perverted, it does more harm than good. Combined endeavours for the accomplishment of objects which are beyond the reach of individual strength

are admirable, when *added* to the exertion of individual strength for that which is *not* beyond our reach; but, apart from this, they are feeble, and, when used to supersede it, they are injurious and absurd. The mechanism of societies bears upon no man's heart or conscience; it has itself no heart, but tends to withdraw from operation the main mover of the moral world, and to substitute for it a mere engine for collecting money, and for giving receipts, which many persons take as a discharge in full for all their obligations to Christianity, and to the world. Our strength lies nowhere but in the heart, and the heart of the poorest Christian constitutes a much more important portion of it than the treasures of the wealthiest. If every Christian would but try heartily to convert every sinner he meets with, it would effect more than all the thousands which are poured into the treasury of the Lord, and the machinery of all the religious societies in the world.

The truth is, therefore, that the church sleeps. Let us all hear the voice of him who is at once weary and grieved at our slumbers: "Awake, awake, O Zion! Put on thy strength!" What we have yet exerted is only our feebleness. We have much more powerful means of making an impression on the world than we have yet employed, and the Captain of the Lord's host summons us to the use of them. Does Zion know that she is asleep? or will she say that the imputation of slumber is a calumny?

The force of the language we are considering goes beyond the mere awakening of activity. It calls, not for a partial, but for an entire, employment of our resources. "*Put on thy strength.*" The meaning cannot be less than this: The scenes which are in prospect will require your *utmost* efforts; the victory will be quite as much as you will be able to win; put into requisition, therefore, all your powers, and exert your whole strength. From what is known of God's administration, it appears that he has always proceeded upon the principle of proportioning the call for exertion to the strength which is possessed. Where this is small, works of the utmost magnitude are wrought as it were without hands; but, if it be more considerable, his methods bring it into full employment. On one occasion he said to his ancient people, "*Stand still*, and see the salvation of God;" but on another he proclaimed, "*Quit you like men*; be strong." And it is

like himself; for, as he does nothing in vain, so neither does he allow any prodigality or wastefulness in his works. Whenever he gives strength he means that it should be employed. We cannot, therefore, suppose for a moment that the conversion of the world will be brought about by anything less than the entire energy of the church. None of that which is given her is meant for waste, or for purposes of self-indulgence, or worldly aggrandizement; and the keeping back of any part of it proportionately hinders the expected victory. Nor is it credible it should be otherwise, when we contemplate the magnitude of the end in view. It might well have been doubted—by many persons it is actually doubted—whether the resources of the church in their amplest extent be adequate to the conversion of the world; but, if we maintain the affirmative on this point, we surely are not disposed to go further, and to imagine that *a part* of those resources is equal to such an achievement. To expect it from the whole energy of the church is faith; but it is madness to expect it from less. Let us remember, therefore, that the realization of the blessed prospects before us is not to be anticipated because something is doing, or because some individuals, or some portions of the Christian world, are actively employed. *Zion* must put on her strength; the whole church, and every individual in it, is called upon to labour, and to labour to the utmost of his means. Is this too much? Would we rather mingle with the mass of Christian activity a leaven of self-indulgence and worldliness? It can be done at no price less than the proportionate extinction of our hopes.

II. We proceed, secondly, to consider the topics by which this call may be enforced.

1. Here it is obvious to notice, in the first place, *the interesting character of the object to be attained.*

The end contemplated in the text was personally and directly interesting to the parties addressed. *Zion* was called to exert herself *for her own triumphs.*

It was for their own restoration to the land of their fathers that the slumbering exiles were summoned to awake. We, also, should remember that the triumphs of Christianity are *our* triumphs, and the increase of the church is *our* enlargement. We are a portion of *Zion* itself, and our condition is identified with hers, whether of sorrow or of joy.



Are we then citizens of a patriotic spirit? Are we identified in heart with the welfare of the great spiritual community to which, by profession, we belong? When Zion is in ruins do we favour the dust thereof? And can we say with one of her ancient sons: "If I forget thee, let my right hand forget her cunning; let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem to my chief joy"? Who should labour for the prosperity of Zion, if her own children do not? And what should arouse us to labour, if it be not the prospect of enlarging the borders and augmenting the glory of the new Jerusalem, which is the mother of us all? Are we willing that the church should continue to be small and despised, or do we really wish to see her arrayed in celestial beauty, and the joy of the whole earth?

The interests of Zion are identified with those of a guilty and perishing world. The progress of Christianity is not like that of a wasting pestilence, or of a destructive conqueror; it bids the wilderness rejoice, and bows the subject nations to the Prince of Peace. Where the power of the Gospel is not felt, there is guilt, and wretchedness, and wrath; every man is in rebellion against his Maker, and beneath his awful indignation. The spread of the Gospel is a remedy, and the only remedy, for these giant evils. There is no other name by which we can be saved, except that which it reveals; there are no influences by which the depraved heart of man can be made holy, except those which accompany its ministration. But the name of Jesus carries salvation to the ends of the earth, and those who submit themselves unto him shall live for ever. Do we then wish for the extermination of iniquity from the earth, and for the rescue of perishing millions from hell? Should we rejoice in the drying up of a world's tears, and in the diffusion of the richest blessings which almighty love can bestow?

The advancement of Zion is identified with the glory of her Lord. The kingdom of grace is his kingdom, and his honour will arise out of its universal establishment. In his church he reigns; and the extension of the church, therefore, is synonymous with the extension of his authority and dominion. Which of the children of Zion, then, are devoted to their King? Which of us are panting to see him enthroned in every land, and in every bosom? Do our hearts burn with indignant grief to see him despised and rejected of men? Do

we glow with ardour to achieve some wider victories for him who so well deserves to reign? Let us awake, and put on our strength; for we have in our hands the sure means of accomplishing these glorious and delightful ends.

2. The call may be enforced, secondly, by *the proximity of the most blessed results*. Triumphs, and even our ultimate triumphs, are at hand.

Now, the prospect of success is one of the most natural stimulants to exertion. Every man is willing to labour in his calling, if he may but see the fruit of his toil. Most cheerfully does the husbandman sow, if he may reap; and the soldier bear the perils of war, if he may gather the laurels of victory. The motive becomes yet more powerful in proportion to the amount of success which may be anticipated. To what unwonted activity would it give birth, for example, if it were said to the husbandman, This year your harvest shall be unusually abundant; or to the merchant, By this voyage you shall amass unprecedented wealth; or to the soldier, By this battle you shall gain a decisive victory: and, if the husbandman exclaims, Now will I sow plentifully, for I shall reap also plentifully; if the merchant, Now I will venture a rich cargo, for I am sure of a large return; if the soldier, Now I will fight bravely, for I know I shall conquer; how much more we, whose harvest is of immortal joys, whose merchandise is the purchase of redeeming blood, and whose victories achieve the glories of Immanuel! If hope were absent, the arm of strength might be unnerved; but strange is the heart that wakes not at her voice, and enters not with vigour and with joy into all the labours which can be pursued beneath her smile.

This consideration is presented to us in a manner peculiarly forcible. Labour for God has always been encouraged by the assurance of success; but in this respect our situation is different from that of Christians in any preceding age. They had to look through dark periods, of longer or shorter duration, before the great and terrible day of the Lord should come; but, though it is not given to us precisely to know the times and the seasons, we have reason to believe that the night is far spent, and the day is at hand. The precious promises, illuminated by the lamp of prophecy, seem to be approaching the fulness of their time, and hastening to the realization of the anticipated blessing, while the move-

ment which has arisen within the church itself, and the hallowed sympathy in the great work which pervades almost all its departments, encourage and confirm our hope. We are expecting now, not merely the success which would have attended devoted efforts for God in any circumstances, but those larger results which shall lead to the universal diffusion of Christianity. It is not now that the ministry of the Gospel shall take one of a family, and two of a city, but that a nation shall be born in a day; for the glory of the Lord is about to be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. In every age it has been said, "Be steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is *not in vain* in the Lord:" but the voice which we hear is far more animating: "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion!" for the time of thy final triumph is at hand. Vigorous and faithful endeavours now shall be attended with a large and extraordinary blessing. There has been one Pentecost, but there comes a second, and a second of superior glory, amidst the results of which it shall be said, "Remember ye not the former things, neither let them come into your mind." Dear brethren, is it such a call that fails to awaken us? Shall we not now arise, and put on our strength? Can we be slothful while such a recompense is attached to our labour? Or is there no bounty upon exertion by which we can be induced to throw off our supineness?

3. The appeal may be yet further enforced by *the necessity of exertion in order to the expected results.*

The glories of the latter day will doubtless be illustrious manifestations of divine power, and the manner of their introduction will show the honour to be God's. But we are too apt to think of them as though they would be achieved by a direct and exclusive interposition of the Most High, apart from a continued and proportioned employment of inferior agency; as though, in a word, the great change were to be wrought by some mighty power while men slept, or, at least, while we continue to pursue the ordinary courses of business or of pleasure; yet such a sentiment, when we come to examine it, is clearly contrary to all God's ordinary methods, and to the most decisive indications of his will. Though he is the great mover of all good things, yet he acts by instruments, and not by himself, in all cases where adapted



instruments exist. In the world of nature, he employs the elements of heat and cold, with their kindred powers, to accomplish the variations of the changeful year. In the world of providence, he makes man the instrument of his own discipline, as well as of the reward or punishment of his fellow-man. And in the world of grace he carries out the same principle; he has never converted a single sinner but by the instrumentality of his truth; and, whenever this blessed work has been more eminently enlarged, it has always been in connexion with an augmented agency. The spread of the Gospel during the apostolic age is an evidence of this never to be forgotten, and with it agree all the facts which can be gathered from the ecclesiastical history of succeeding ages, down to the present time. Why should the future differ from the past? Or where is the scriptural indication that it is to do so? There is not the slightest reason to think that sinners are ever to be converted to God but by the experimental influence of his Word, or to expect any enlarged success without a corresponding enlargement of heart and of labour. Before they shall all know the Lord, that all-important wisdom is to be communicated *by every man to his brother*; before the greatness of the harvest is gathered in, multiplied labourers are to enter into the field. Whatever had been told him, how unreasonable would it be for a husbandman to expect an abundant harvest, apart from the proportionate culture of the spring; or for a merchant to revel in imaginary wealth, while he sent forth no goods for which return could be made; or for a soldier to exult in anticipated victory, without coming to the charge! Yet no less unreasonable are we, when we imagine that a wide extension of Christ's kingdom will occur without corresponding exertions of ours. Whatever certainty might exist of a large harvest, or of a rich merchandise, or of a decisive victory, you would not scruple to affirm, in either and in all of these cases, that, without activity, it could not, and would not, be realized: nor can we hesitate at all to say, that, if the strength of the church be not put forth, the world never will be converted. We know that God has decreed it, that his Word has foretold it, that the promises teem with its glory, and that the Saviour waits for his reward; but, unless we arise and labour, it can never be accomplished. God has as truly predetermined the means as the result; and his

decree as certainly precludes a deviation from the method, as a failure in the end. Although the necessity of human instrumentality does not arise from any weakness on the part of the Almighty, but solely from his good pleasure to employ it, the necessity of it becomes as absolute on this latter ground as it could be on the former. His purposes are as immutable as his nature; and he will no more change his plan of operation, than he will abandon its final result. Though he has attached to human efforts, therefore, an importance which they do not possess in themselves, that importance is now as real as though it were intrinsic; and the exertions of men are nothing less than essential to the extension of Christianity.

We have not now an opportunity to dwell upon all the humbling and elevating tendencies of this sentiment; we notice only its influence as a stimulus to exertion. "Awake," says the voice from heaven, "put on thy strength, for days of triumph are at hand." And those triumphs require your strength, they cannot be achieved without your activity. To a man who feels the value of the object it is needful to say no more; but, if there be those whom the call fails to arouse, who would rather sit still than labour; who, while they imagine they should rejoice in the result, cannot find it in their hearts to strive for its production, but quietly wait for its arrival while they continue to pursue life's ordinary course—to them we say, If you will not sow, you cannot reap; if you will not fight, you can never conquer. Abandon, therefore, all the prospects which you say have cheered you; and be assured that, while sloth continues, the world will be a desert. Your supineness throws to an immeasurable distance the period of Zion's joy; and, were there not hope, either of arousing you, or of seeing a generation succeed you of a different character, it would cover the whole prospect with darkness, and write vanity on all the promises of God.

4. The language of the text may be enforced, finally, by *the actual suspension of the issue upon our obedience*. It suggests the animating sentiment, that the final glories of the church are waiting for her awaking, and for that alone. It is as though the voice had said, "All things are ready, and the hour is come; now, therefore, awake; put on thy strength, and the battle is won."

It is an obvious fact, that, whatever progress the Gospel

is making, the ultimate triumphs of Christianity are still in abeyance. We see not yet all things put under his feet, whose right, and whose destiny, it is to reign. Nothing like a *rapid* extension of the Gospel is visible in heathen lands. The main bulwarks of superstition—the Brahminical, the Chinese, and the Mahomedan—though defended only by the blind and the lame, hitherto defy the armies of the living God. In Christendom the state of things is yet worse. The unbroken power of the Papal delusion, the death-like formality cherished by Protestant establishments, together with the infidelity, and all monstrous and horrible things, which revel at large under so extensive and almost impenetrable a shelter, are still the grand features of our times. Something, indeed, is attempted for the advancement of Christ's kingdom, and we bless God that some success has crowned the attempt; but that success is by no means great, either in proportion to the magnitude of the object contemplated, the expectations entertained, or the efforts employed. It is not yet as it was in ancient days, nor as it is to be before the end shall come. With the most heartfelt thankfulness for the tens of thousands who have been rescued from destruction, we have to recollect that the millions and the hundreds of millions are perishing, and that the Gospel is fitted to become the salvation of them all. Why has it saved no more? Why have the great bulk of those who have heard it despised and rejected it? And why are the numbers who submit to its power in our own land of light and privilege, even less than among the wretched victims of avarice and wrong in Western India, or in the scattered islets of the Southern Sea? Is it that the cup of mercy is not yet full, or that the time is not fully come? Is it that the weapons in employ are of unsuitable temper, or that the Captain of our salvation is unmindful of his host? All things conspire to instruct us that the final diffusion of Christianity is at hand; and the whole earth heaves with the moving principles which are to accomplish the subversion of all that opposes Immanuel's dominion: but the triumph waits *because the church sleeps*. We conceive, and we cannot hesitate to express our conviction, that her slumbers provoke the admonition of her Lord: "Awake, awake, O Zion; put on thy strength!" If we should point to the efforts which are making, and the thousands of wealth that are expended

upon his cause, it might be considered as no answer to his appeal. Even here there is matter of humiliation rather than of complacency. But his reply might be, "This is not your strength. Seek every man the conversion of his fellow, and say every man to his neighbour, Know the Lord. Bring to my service, not only the mechanism of societies, but the fervour of the heart. Give me, not only your money, but your importunity. Offer on my altar, not only your wealth, but your supineness; not only your prayers, but your personal exertions. Try me now *herewith*, saith the Lord, and see if I will not pour you out a blessing."

If this were the principle of his conduct it would be perfectly just, for it is only upon *sincere* devotedness that we can expect him to smile. But consistency is a necessary evidence of sincerity. And how can devotedness to God be deemed consistent, when there is a cherished neglect of some of the most obvious and obligatory modes of its exhibition? If the various expressions of missionary zeal were genuine fruits of love to the Saviour and his cause, would not the same principles produce the equally characteristic fruits of personal endeavour for the same end? Can he be supposed to have much pity for a sinner perishing at the distance of half the globe, who shows none for one that is in his own house? It is impossible; and it is high time that such delusions should be banished from among us. Whatever there is of missionary contribution or effort, apart from personal and actual endeavour to save the sinners around us, is but a mockery of God, and an imposition on ourselves. Why should our personal indolence blast our associated efforts, by attaching to them a character of insincerity, if not of hypocrisy, which forbids the Most Holy to pour down his blessing?

If, indeed, a large measure of success were to crown the present system of exertion, it would give to the diffusion of Christianity a most perverse and incredible aspect. We should see it then, as in part we already do, extending very rapidly in Jamaica and Tahiti, while it would be, as it really is, comparatively stationary on the continent of Europe, and in England. We should see falling before the spiritual weapons of our warfare the cannibalism of the New Zealander, the idolatry of the Hindoo, the theism of Boodh, and the philosophy of Confucius; while there would be per-



petuated, in almost undiminished magnitude, the irreligion of Christendom, the soul-destroying formality of its national establishments, and the wide-spreading infidelity which now, almost unmasked, riots in its domain. Would it not be unnatural, and even monstrous, that the extension of Christianity should have such an aspect as this? Are we expecting that religion shall be thus *transported*, instead of being diffused? Is not the leaven to transform the lump by first acting on its immediate vicinity, and then extending its influence to more distant regions? In truth, these remoter conquests are by no means the chief of those which the Gospel has to win. Its main battle will not be fought in the islands of the Pacific, or on the sands of Africa, or on the shores of the Ganges; but on the fields of Europe, perhaps in the privileged sanctuaries of Britain. What would it be to Christianity if all the savage lands were subjected to her sway, while the companion demons of scepticism and irreligion stalked through the walks of literature, presided in the halls of science, and prowled through the whole circle of society; while, in melancholy proof of their dominion, the great majority of every rank were revelling either in splendid or in vulgar sins? Is her triumph to be reduced to this, that she is to remain stationary, or struggling, on the high places of the earth, and to reign only over the Negro, the Hottentot, and the Hindoo? We cannot allow ourselves to anticipate such an issue. From the whole earth which is to see the salvation of God, surely the European and the British lands are to be no exception. It is here, in truth, that the grand resources of the church exist; and for *their* evangelization the day of glory cannot come, until an energy proportionate to its immense strength is put forth.

I am by no means content with the bearing which this representation may seem to have upon the societies which, with high and consistent excellence, now aim at the cultivation of the British waste, and the cleansing of our polluted streets. Even these societies are as yet feeble; but the strength of Zion does not lie in societies, but in individuals, and in the energy of personal exertion.

And we have said already that there is no prodigality, or wastefulness, in the divine administration. He produces nothing but for some useful end. But, if he were to bring on the universal extension of Christianity while the resources

he has provided for it are not fully employed, it would be a manifest departure from this rule of his conduct. He would have generated strength adapted to an invaluable end, without having given scope, or a summons, to its exercise. We ourselves are Zion's strength. If we dedicate not ourselves to the work, it is through supineness and sloth, through self-indulgence and worldly love, through indifference or fear; and is this a state of things which we can expect God to honour? Will he absurdly give the victory to a host which gazes idly on the foe, and attach a bounty to a spirit which deserves no other name than that of ingratitude and unfaithfulness?

We cannot hesitate to express our belief, therefore, that the final glories of Zion are waiting till she puts on her strength: but we believe, also, that they will wait no longer. Let her but throw off her slumbers, and the dawn of the expected day will simultaneously appear. All things are ready for her triumph, which waits only for a last and proportionate effort. O! if every person who knows the Lord would but throw out his whole energy for the conversion of his fellow; if there should be no longer left in the tabernacles of Zion any example which does not shine, any life which does not speak, any influence which is not employed, as well as any treasure which is not consecrated, then, verily, would the Lord command his blessing, and all the ends of the earth should see his glory. From such a state of things he could not withhold it. When has he withheld a proportionate blessing from devoted zeal? Was it in the apostolic age, when the gods of the nations, and the vices of the world, fell before the power of his Gospel? Was it in the dense darkness amidst which the light of the Reformation broke on the deluded earth, and the spectral superstitions of which it drove back with the astounded shades? Was it in the days of our fathers, when the dauntless voice of separate individuals aroused, like a clap of thunder, the sleeping population both of the old world and the new? Or is it now, when the heart-felt piety of the negro spreads like a contagion through the mournful bands of the exiled captives; or when the islands of the Southern Sea are blossoming like the garden of the Lord? And will it be then, and only then, when, in the end of the world, the awakened church shall make an effort more comprehensive, more uniform,

more consistent, more devoted than she has ever made? It is impossible. O Zion! put on thy strength, and thy triumph is won.

If we are right in considering this passage as the voice of the Lord to his church at the present period, it is highly important that it should be solemnly regarded, and more especially that it should be associated with the present voice of the church to her Lord. There has been manifested of late a deeper conviction of the necessity of divine influence in order to crown our efforts with success, and an apparent augmentation of the fervour with which an outpouring of the Holy Spirit has been supplicated. We have publicly, and perhaps, also, privately, addressed the God of Israel in the language, "Awake, awake! put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in ancient days!" Have we heard his answer to our supplications? It is this: "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion! It is well that you have acknowledged the necessity of my blessing, now betake yourselves to the fulfilment of your labours. In your own hands are the means of accomplishing all that you have sought. Go, and say every man to his neighbour, Know the Lord, and the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea." Have our prayers been associated with our endeavours, and has our sincerity been verified by our diligence? Or have we contented ourselves with prayer, without a determined mortification of our supineness, and augmentation of our zeal? Are we expecting that prayer alone will be a blessing to the world, and comforting ourselves with the thought that we have now thrown the burden of its conversion on our Maker? Let us remember, then, that he flings it back upon ourselves. The conversion of the world, says he, as to the whole labour of it, is yours, and your means are fully sufficient for its accomplishment. You call upon me to put on my strength; I require you to put on yours. It is not my slumbers that hinder the triumphs of the Gospel, but your own. "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion!" He has no otherwise to do with the conversion of the world than he has with the ripening of the harvest; in both cases he has to pour out his blessing in order to give efficacy to the means employed, nor can the harvest of the spiritual husbandry be separated from the industry which is required in the natural.



What is the influence, then, of this language upon us? We individually, if we know and love the Lord, are the parties addressed in it. For Zion to awake and put on her strength, is for every Christian to awake and put on his strength, in the cause of his Redeemer. Are we individually disposed to do so? Do we mean each of us to do, not only something, but all that we can, for the conversion of sinners, and of every sinner for whose conversion we can do anything at all? With respect to the perishing of distant lands, for whose help our pecuniary aid is properly and earnestly solicited, are we about to make a contribution justly proportioned to our wealth, and the inestimable value of the object? And, with respect to those to whom we may have direct and personal access, our children and our parents, our servants and our labourers, our relatives and our friends, our neighbours and our acquaintances—do we mean to do anything for these? Even if you subscribe to a home missionary society, or if you are a visitor in a Christian instruction society, the first sphere of action may yet be overlooked—it is your own house, and your immediate circle. Do you mean to do anything there? For these, which are the most hopeful of all efforts, we have immense strength, but it has not yet been employed. Are we about to employ it, or to repeat our excuses, and to perpetuate our neglects? Oh! if there were a person who felt disposed for a moment towards the latter of these courses, I would say to him, Is it nothing, then, to you, that, by calling you out of darkness into marvellous light, the God of grace has fitted you to promote so blessed an end as the conversion of the world? Will the husbandman toil for his harvest, the merchant incur hazards for wealth, and the soldier risk his life for victory, while you will do nothing for a far nobler end? Is it nothing to you that the diffusion of the Gospel is so linked with human instrumentality that it cannot be achieved without it, and that your sluggishness and fearfulness prolong the reign of iniquity, and multiply the destruction of souls? Would you really rather that the progress of the Gospel should be hindered, and that men around you should die in their sins, than be at the trouble of mortifying your carnality, your pride, or your self-indulgence? At all events, if such be the real state of your heart, it is high time you should come to the knowledge of it. Tell us no more, and do not any more

deceive yourself by imagining, that you are identified with the cause of the Saviour, or are anticipating with joy the glories of the latter day. The final triumphs of Christianity are nothing to you; at least, they are less dear to you than your carnality and your sloth. Though they should never come, you would not strive for the conversion of sinners. Vain is it to tell you of the blessedness of Immanuel's kingdom, or the greatness of your obligations to him; your heart acknowledges no commanding sympathy with the welfare of the world, or the glory of the Saviour. You profess his name, but you are a dead weight upon his cause, and no loss could it suffer if you were to abandon it. But, if yet you cannot abandon it, O become worthy of it! Bring home to your heart, by serious meditation, the quickening appeal which is made to you from above. Awake from your slumbers, put on your strength! O! let us not be men of such defective character as to be an obstruction to our Redeemer's victory, and to make him say, "I must sweep these sleepers from the earth, and replace them with more devoted followers, ere I can cover it with my glory!"

I take occasion from this subject to address to ungodly men one observation. You have often wondered, perhaps, why the Gospel, which is by us so highly estimated as an instrument of conversion, should make so little impression. And we acknowledge to you that the effect of it is far less than might be expected from its divine adaptation and appointment. But we take the shame to ourselves. We have not been faithful to our trust. You know perfectly how remiss we have been in endeavouring to fix upon your hearts the great convincing and persuasive truths of the divine Word; you have lived with us without feeling that we regarded you as enemies to God, or that we made any effort to induce you to be reconciled to him. Is it wonderful you are still impenitent? How different the case might have been, if our conduct towards you had been different! It shows, not that we are feeble, only that we have not put on our strength. But that there is a power in God's Word your own consciences testify, for you dread to meditate on it. You find it of so penetrating and subduing an influence, that you have no remedy against it but forgetfulness, and are constrained to make inconsideration your perpetual shield. By that means,

indeed, you may shield yourselves from everything. If the matters declared in the Scriptures were a thousand times more weighty than they are, if they *did* comprehend what we have often told you they do, all that is moving in the wrath, or melting in the love, of God, you could defy it by thoughtlessness. It is thus you defy the Gospel now. But to what a pinnacle of folly does it elevate you! and to what a depth of ruin will you fall! There are things in the Bible so irresistibly influential, that you cannot think of them attentively for ten minutes without being touched to your very heart; yet you are so afraid of their influence, so determined not to yield to it, that you refuse it a place in your remembrance. And these are the things, too, which involve your future and eternal condition, which urge you to flee from the wrath to come, and set open before you the gate of heaven! O most melancholy infatuation! And it is you whom we have failed to exhort—to persuade! Forgive us; but perish not, though we have been unfaithful. Your souls are unutterably precious. Behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation; and yet is our living Intercessor able to save to the uttermost. The fountain of his blood is open; and in his name we now beseech you, “Be ye reconciled to God!”

## “THE TIME IS SHORT.”\*

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I HAD announced for this evening a sermon to the young, and I had been asking myself what should be my subject. Behold! beloved friends, the subject which God has given me. One in the prime of life has been cut down in the very midst of us. He was quite young enough for his death to furnish a theme of instruction to the young, and yet old enough for the same event to supply a warning to those of more advanced age.

The passage which I have deemed most suitable for the improvement of this solemn and affecting providence, you will find in the first epistle to the Corinthians, 7th chapter, ver. 29-31.

“But this I say, brethren, the time is short. It remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they possessed not; and they that use this world as though they used it not;† for the fashion of this world passeth away.”

It is obvious that the passage throws itself into two divisions. Under the former we put those parts of it in which the apostle lays down some general facts relating to our condition; into the latter, the solemn inferences which he draws from the ground he has established.

I. We look first at that division of the text which comprehends the statements of general facts relating to our present condition. “This I say, brethren, the time is short . . . the fashion of this world passeth away.”

1. We notice, in the first place, the latter of these affirma-

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\* Preached at Reading, January 30th, 1837, on occasion of the death of Mr. Theophilus Williams.

† For this translation there is the highest authority.

tions. "The fashion of this world passeth away." When we look at the phrase, "the fashion of this world," we do not immediately understand it. Sometimes the word here rendered "fashion" appears to be pleonastic, or redundant; so that, in full harmony with the language employed, we may read—"the world passeth away." This is true. However long the world may last, it is but a transitory scene. There was a time when it was made, and there shall be a time when it will sink out of existence again.

Look, however, at the passage as it stands—"the *fashion* of this world passeth away." We must not take the word in the sense which at first may appear to arise from it. We know that the various fashions of the world do pass away, lasting but for a season, and perhaps not so long. The fashion of this year may be the abhorrence of the next. But the term here rendered "fashion" has reference to the entire external condition of the human race. When it is said, therefore, that "the fashion of this world passeth away," the meaning is that there is no permanency in anything which relates to the outward condition of man. His ordinary transactions are not to be perpetual; his joys and sorrows are all temporary. And so are his connexions. There are not to be parents and children, husbands and wives, for ever. These names and relations are brought into existence only for a time, even though it may be for a long time. There were not such things *from* eternity, and there are not to be such things *to* eternity. It is but a portion of our existence which is to be bound up in such ties; to them all there is to be a termination. Our thoughts of love, our fond affections, our assiduous cares, our industrious labours, our lucrative engagements, our tender griefs—all will have an end. They are fast passing away. It is not to be a perpetuity of existence chequered by these lights and shades, devoted to these occupations, or characterized by these relations. We shall at some time be in a place where there is nothing to be bought, and nothing to be sold. We shall have passed into a world where we shall no more call one another husband or wife, parent or child. We shall ultimately stand in an independent, though still associated, existence, looking back upon a state in which perhaps "such things *were*;" but we shall have found that "the fashion of this world passeth away."



2. The apostle teaches us, in the second place, that "the time is short"—the time, that is to say, in which the condition of men will be changed.

"The time is short." This might have been truly said, if the apostle had had in contemplation the existence of the whole race of man upon the earth. Time is short, very short, however many thousands of years it may comprehend. It is short in comparison with eternity from which it sprang; that vast, unchanging ocean, into which the brief stream of time shall pour itself. It is short in comparison even with the existence of man; because, though on earth he too appears but for a short period, beyond this world he shall exist for ever.

"The time is short." This is emphatically true in reference to the entire duration of human life. Suppose that we sustain all the domestic relations unbroken to the "threescore years and ten," or, "by reason of strength," to the "fourscore years;" what is this in comparison with eternity? Say that we may live as parents or children, as husbands or wives, or as active men in worldly affairs, for eighty or a hundred years; the life which is to come will count not only a hundred years, but more than tens of thousands, more than millions of years. It will never end. So that the portion in which we sustain these relations, and engage in these pursuits, is but a fraction, a mere point in our existence. And what a minute point shall we conceive it to be, when we shall look back on it from eternity! When, from that region of durable realities, we shall catch a distant view of the world we shall have left, into what a moment, and less than a moment, will all these affairs, which now expand so widely, seem to have been crowded and condensed!

"The time is short." This language is still more strikingly true in relation to the manner in which the life of man is often cut off by the providence of God. Life is a short term if it extends through a century, but *it may be much shorter*. Solemn dispensations thrust themselves upon us in a manner most powerfully adapted to convince us of this.

"The time is short." What time? The time for buying and selling is short. Look at this dear friend. He had just entered into business. The cares and activities had recently devolved upon him, which his now bereaved father had sustained before him. *He* now says that the time was short

in which they had devolved upon *him*; but how much shorter was that during which they devolved upon his son! *His* application to business has soon terminated. Newly ordered goods had just arrived, many of them were yet unpacked; and in that very day his thoughts perished.

“The time is short.” What time? The time for love and mutual fondness, the time for clasping wives to our bosom, the time for binding ourselves with the strongest ties that mortality knows. *His* time was very short. He had been a husband but sixteen months. The tender tie was quickly snapped asunder. His bridal bed was soon converted into the bed of death.

“The time is short.” What time? The time for fondling dear babes on our knees; for looking in their sweet countenances, to see reflected in them their parents’ image; for thinking of their succeeding to their parents’ cares, and upholding their parents’ steps. Our time is short for these fond anticipations. *His* babe is just six months old, and he has taken his last look at him. He had thought, peradventure, to hear him say, Papa; but he will never listen to that thrilling sound. He had thought, peradventure, to lend kind assistance to the mother in her arduous charge; but she must pursue her course alone.

“The time is short.” What time? The time for a young man to glory in his strength, to cultivate his understanding, to put forth his energies. The age of twenty-eight years is written on his coffin; an age at which it might have been thought that the dangers of youth had been past, and that, a settled vigour having been reached, he was in little peril till those of age overtook him. But not so. There was a worm at the root of that gourd, which withered it even before the sun waxed hot on his head. How short *his* time was! And so is *ours*. A few days, and all that we enjoy here, save religion, will be brought to a close. And no one knows what shall be *on the morrow*.

II. Such are the general facts relating to our condition which the apostle affirms. “The time is short—the fashion of this world passeth away.” We proceed to consider the important inferences which he draws from the ground thus established. “It remaineth, therefore, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though



they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they possessed not; and they that use the world as though they used it not."

1. In this language we regard the apostle as inculcating, first, the indispensable wisdom of renouncing the world as our portion. Where can the wisdom be of loving the world so well as to make it our portion? Is it wise to rest in its passions and pursuits? "The fashion of it passeth away," and that very soon. Say that you are a man of business—say that you are a *young* man of business, that you have recently entered on its concerns, have laid your plans, prepared your premises, expended your capital, and formed your connexions;—you are now making *a portion* of your business. What portion of your existence is it to occupy? What if you could carry it on for fourscore years? These are but a few, in comparison with those you are to spend beyond the grave. But what a fraction of these few may be so employed! Really, the devotedness of some men to their shops is such as though they thought they were to be tradesmen for ever. Strange infatuation! Suppose Theophilus Williams had been such a tradesman! Or suppose that with such a habit as yours he had been laid in the grave!

Say that you have recently formed family connexions; that you have clasped to your arms the object of your love, and bound her to yourself by what you may deem a perpetual tie; say that a sweet babe has crowned your union, that he smiles in your face, and, while he returns your blandishments, fills your heart with unutterable anticipations;—are you going to make *a portion* of your wife and your child, and to let your heart sink down satisfied in that love? How large a period of your existence, then, can be devoted to these affections? Do you not know that the very names of husband and wife, parent and child, are but for a moment? All the joys they represent are but as a vapour, that appeareth for a very little while, and then vanisheth away. Will you make a portion of *them*, and be destitute for eternity? Suppose he whom we mourn had been such a parent, and had left his *ALL* behind, would his end have been so peaceful?

In whatever respect any of you are making a portion of the world, or are disposed to do so, and whether young or old, take this warning. "The fashion of this world passeth away," and in a space of time which is very "short." "Love

not the world,” therefore, “neither the things that are in the world.” Your existence is to be *long, very long*, and immeasurably the longer portion of it is to be spent in a far distant region. There you are to live *for ever*. It is *eternity* that should be provided for, not *time*. And, if there be any wisdom in the pains which is universally taken to make provision for time, how powerfully does it rebuke the almost universal neglect of eternity! Dear hearers, have you made provision for eternity? Or, if you have not, will you do it to-day?

Some of you in that group of mourners are in circumstances similar to those of your departed relative; bound by similar family ties, and similarly situated in business. I should be glad to know—in the presence of this congregation, I press it upon you to inquire—whether you are renouncing the world as your portion. Are you, dear friends, giving your hearts to the Lord? Are you yielding yourselves to the salutary influence of this event? Agitated I know you are. You do not lose a brother without feeling it. But unsanctified nature can feel, and feel deeply. Have you holy feeling? Does the influence of this event go through your very soul? Are you made to say, “I no longer look upon things earthly as my portion. I will no longer be a man of the world. What will it be to me hereafter?” Or are you trying to get through this distressing period without relinquishing your hold of the world; knowing at the same time, that it must soon be taken from your grasp, and that this warning will return on you with tenfold agony, if it is despised?

But, if there is nothing in this world that is worthy of our affections, where shall we deposit them? What shall we love? What possession is there for immortality? To this all-important question the Scriptures furnish us with an explicit answer. “Set your affections *on things above*, not on things on the earth” (Col. iii. 2). Say, “**THE LORD IS MY PORTION.**” What an inestimable privilege to call him so! There is no satisfaction for the soul, no provision for eternity, but in this. O cleave to God as your supreme and everlasting good! What amplitude, what firmness, what durability, shall characterize Him as the portion of your soul! He is worth living for. Him we can enjoy for ever. He shall remain when the earth is consumed, and although the entire universe should sink into nothing.

You ask me, then, how shall a poor polluted creature venture to set his heart on God? Is he permitted to do so? Is not God angry with sinners? Yes; but he is also reconciling them to himself by Jesus Christ his Son. The fountain is opened for sin and for uncleanness, and the precious blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. The accepted Advocate is before the throne, ever living to make intercession for us. Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world, and who is able to save unto the uttermost all them that come unto God by him. Come, disappointed ones, whom the world has never satisfied, and never will satisfy—come, you who are awakened from the slumber of earthly affection by the startling event which now appeals to you—come all, and centre your affections upon God. For thus saith our Redeemer, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me; and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out" (John xiv. 6; vi. 37). Which of you will not avail yourselves of the opportunity of saying—

Now I forbid my carnal hope,  
My fond desires recall;  
I give my mortal interest up,  
And make my God my all.

2. As the apostle thus leads us to reject the world as our portion, so he challenges us to live with hearts deadened to its influence. "It remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they possessed not; and they that use this world as though they used it not."

It is not to be supposed, in any measure, that the apostle is enjoining hardness of heart. It could not be his wish to steel the affections of the husband against the wife, or those of the wife against the husband; or in any respect to induce an entire disregard for objects of earthly love. These are God's gifts, and nothing does more than religion to awaken, and augment, the sensibilities of our nature to them. What is enjoined is a due and supreme regard for things which are heavenly and divine. He means that, seeing "the fashion of this world passeth away," and "the time" of remaining in it "is short," we should be very jealous lest our affections

cleave to it; and that we should, by keeping eternity in view, retain in due subordination the things of time. The infinite vastness of eternity demands that, whatever we have on earth, we should be *as though* we possessed it not; that, whatever we love on earth, we should be *as though* we loved it not.

Let us hear the warning. Christians! the world, I hope and believe, is not your portion; but yet may a searching inquiry—perhaps in some of us this searching providence—detect more earthly love than we can justify. Why should we love creature comforts so fondly? "The fashion" of these things "passeth away."

Young wives, look upon your husbands as taught by this affecting stroke how soon they may pass away; and learn to love them now, just as you would wish to have loved them should you speedily see them on their death-bed. Cherish just such affection, and so much, as you can sustain when the stroke of death comes—*no more*.

Men of business! Christians in the world! Live above the world. Remember that "those who buy" should be "as though they possessed not." Take care that the concerns of business have not too strong a hold on your regard. Think how *he* said (who is gone) on his dying bed, "What are all these things to me?" Conceive yourselves always to be dying men; and every day give just so much attention to business, as you would if you knew that *that* day you should die.

Weeping, suffering, Christians! The shortness of "the time" should stay your tears. Seeing that "the fashion of this world passeth away," "they that weep" should be "as though they wept not." It is a hard lesson. Whatever else may be vain, there are times when grief and tears seem to be realities. But "the time is short," very short; and weeping time is short. It is "but for a moment." Let us not, therefore, dwell upon our griefs, which, by being dwelt upon, quickly run to excess. Let us think rather how long the time will be, and how soon it will arrive, in which we shall shed no tears. O! when we realize this, can we not stay a few of the many tears which flow so freely now; and, weeping, be "as though" we wept not! Let the shortness of the time for sorrow raise us above the sorrows which we bear. And let the worldlings see, that, though we grieve

with them, we grieve not like them; but that in the midst of tears we can smile,—we, whose sufferings are but for a moment, whose bliss shall be for eternity.

What a happiness it is to be able to say that the truths which the death of our lamented friend thus powerfully teaches animated and governed his life! And they did so. His religious experience commenced about seven years ago; when he would have become a member of the church in this place, had he not imbibed the sentiment that baptism and the Lord's supper were not designed as permanent ordinances—a sentiment in holding which I give him credit for entire sincerity. He grew in piety, however, till his death. His piety manifested itself by a spirit of Christian co-operation. He was always ready to do what he could for objects of public usefulness. At one period he kindly took charge of the library connected with this congregation. Subsequently he became a visitor in the Christian Instruction Society. In this department he laboured with much fidelity and promptness. Perhaps there may be some present this evening whom he has visited. If I am speaking to any such persons, what shall I say to you? Was he faithful to you? If you perish, will the blood of your souls be on his head? Did he point out your sinfulness and ruin, and direct you to the Lamb of God? I believe—I know—he did. You know, and God knows, that he is clear of your blood. O be also clear of your own! Were it not better to take the counsels he gave, and to pursue the same path to bliss? Will it not lead to a happier meeting if you treat him as your guide to Jesus, than if you constrain him to be a witness to the aggravation of your guilt?

He also became, at my request, joint secretary with me to the Auxiliary Baptist Missionary Society established among us. In this respect he was a right arm to me. He was to me almost as a brother. Is there another among you as willing to render the assistance he may no longer supply?

His engagements in business had latterly been enlarged, but, though his activity was great, he did not forsake the Lord. Often did he pray with his wife in secret. He also maintained family prayer, a service in which latterly his exercises had plainly indicated much fervour of heart. And on several occasions I have had pleasure in observing the powerful steadiness of his piety.



He had recovered from the influenza nearly to his general state of health, when he was seized with an attack of pleurisy of great violence. This day fortnight, when I preached on the duties and consolations of a time of general sickness, he was in the house of God. The same night he was taken ill; and, although he rose for a short space on Monday, he soon took again to his bed, which he never afterwards left. After most assiduous attention, and most strenuous efforts to save his life, the physician intimated on Sunday morning that he was obliged to abandon all hope. This was heavy tidings for a trembling father to carry to the chamber of sickness, and no wonder that the tears fell fast down his furrowed cheeks ere he could announce them. "Don't cry, father," said Theophilus; "I shall be better soon"—the giving way of nature under the power of disease having at that time been mistaken by him for symptoms of amendment, and for a moment dispelled the anticipation of death with which, almost from the first he had been occupied: "I shall be better soon." "My son, you will soon be in heaven." The effect of this announcement was startling, but it was far from being painful. Looking up, he said, "Is it so? Then that *is* glad tidings." And an unbroken brightness cheered his heart from this moment until he expired.

Between the services last Lord's day I saw him. When I went into the room, in the presence of many members of the family, he held out his hand to me, and said, "My dear pastor, little did I think, when hearing you preach so often, I should go before you." Taking his hand, I said, "I hope God is your strength." "Yes, he is," replied this dear, dying, friend; "and he will be my portion for ever." I then said, "Well, Theophilus, it is pleasant to think that we have done something for Christ together. You have helped me in various ways in his service; and that is not painful to think of on a deathbed, and it may be remembered with gratitude in heaven." "Mention it not," he replied; "if I am not washed in the blood of Christ, and clothed in his righteousness, there is no hope for me." Then, as if recalling himself, he added, "Yet I hope I have loved him: but it has been so little, so very little." "Can you give up your wife and child?" I inquired. "Yes," he said: "God will be with them—God will be with them." Subsequently he called for his babe. The unconscious infant was in touching contrast

with the sad scene, as he offered over him a prayer, expressive of all that a dying father could desire.

Nothing was more remarkable in the state of his mind, than his uniform gladness in the prospect of death. In the interview which I had with him, he said, "I did not think God was preparing me for heaven so soon, when he enlarged my heart in prayer. But he has of late smiled on me so sweetly—so very sweetly!" He took notice of all that was pleasing around him as affording illustrations of a better world; so, when the beams of the sun entered his chamber, he said "it reminded him of that brighter sun he should so soon behold." On Monday, when he was rapidly sinking, his soul seemed absolutely on the wing with joyousness. Speaking of a relative skilled in music, he said, "Send for him, that he may sing to me the 'Dying Christian,' the fervent language of which was scarcely fervent enough for his panting spirit. His feeble frame seemed too full with joy, as he was thus preparing to touch the heavenly harp with notes of grateful and endearing love.

Altogether there have been, perhaps, but few characters of greater loveliness in life, or of greater dignity in death. His dying hour I will not call less than a noble specimen, both of nature, and of grace. What grave and solemn utterance he gave to counsels of wisdom and love; and what universal concern he evinced for the living, while he so easily shook off all that could bind him to earth, there were many indications. He sent a message to the men who worked for him, concerning their salvation. Some of them, perhaps, are hearing me. I ask you, was not his dying warning consistent with his life? You saw his example; you heard his counsel. Are you going to act upon it?

The anxiety he felt for the spiritual welfare of his relatives was intense. Is not this engraven on your hearts, dear friends? Ye mourners! hear his words—(I shall never forget them)—"Do love Jesus Christ. Be a decided Christian. Associate with none but true Christians." The relative to whom, in the presence of the weeping family, these touching counsels were addressed, sobbed as he heard them. O! we will pray that the effect may be much deeper and more lasting than these sobs. Remember, all of you, that this scene of sorrow should not pass away without profit. God has sent it for your good. He has struck one who was ready

to die, peradventure in compassion to those of you who are unprepared. Recompense his kindness. Do not depart from this place of tears without a surrender of yourselves to his service. If you have been separated in life, secure a happy reunion in heaven. Oh! what agony if the entreaties of his dying moments should be neglected; if, in the great assembling day, any whom he loved should be lost! I would take each of you by the hand (all of you are as brothers and as sisters to me), and say, "Shall it be you?" Each of you recoils with horror from such an anticipation. You say, No, no, no! Then make certain of it now. Renounce procrastination. *Now*, while you have the opportunity, be at once decided for God!

O happy family! in which all who have yet died are gone to heaven! Still more happy, if all who yet live shall be united with them there!

## THE INCARNATION OF OUR LORD JESUS.\*

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“And the Word was made flesh.”—*John* i. 14.

THERE is no doubt of the meaning of the term “*the Word*” in this place; the use of it in the earlier verses of this chapter establishes its application beyond question. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; the same was in the beginning with God; all things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made; in him was life, and the life was the light of men” (*John* i. 1-4). It is a Being, therefore, who is here spoken of under the emblematic term, “the Word;” the same Being, undoubtedly, who, in the language of sacred Scripture, is known as the Son of God, the second person of the divine and ever-blessed Trinity.

Now we are here told that “the Word was made flesh:” what are we to understand by this? *Flesh* is the literal, and the correct, rendering of the term which is here employed in the original; but it is a term which is not always to be understood in its literal meaning. Thus, for example, the prophet tells us, “All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field” (*Isa.* xl. 6). And again, “The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together” (*Isa.* xl. 5). Inasmuch, then, as one of the elements of which the human body is composed is flesh, so by the term *flesh* human beings come to be very properly defined. And when we are told that “the Word was made flesh,” the idea which we take from it is that he was made a human being—a man.

But still we have to ask the question, In what sense do we understand this declaration?

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\* Preached at Bishopsgate Chapel, London, on Tuesday evening, Oct. 9th, 1838.

There have been people who understood that, though the Word assumed the form and the appearance of a man, he really did not assume substantial human nature, and that the form and appearance of a man was only visionary; he seemed to be a man, but he was the phantom of a man. Now this is not the doctrine which we hold, or the doctrine we would propound to you this evening. Neither, on the other hand, do we hold any transmutation of the divine nature into the human. When it is said "the Word was made flesh," or made a human being, we do not understand by it that any change took place in the nature of Deity, so as to convert it into the nature of humanity. There would seem to be something altogether impossible, as there is certainly something totally unwarrantable, in such a notion. But, when we say, or when we read, that "the Word was made flesh," or became a human being, we understand by it this; that the Word, or Son of God, took the nature of a human being into a personal union with himself, and so united the body and soul, which together constitute a man, with the essentially divine nature, which constituted himself as the Word, or Son of God, that these two in their combination should, and did, constitute one person. "The Word was made flesh," or became a human being.

Collateral evidence of this fact is not wanting in Holy Writ. The evangelical histories prove that our Lord Jesus Christ was a man. We find there an account of his birth, of his childhood, of his growth to manhood, of his eating and drinking, of his passing through many and various scenes of labour, and ultimately of his death; so that our Lord Jesus Christ was a man. But was he *more* than man? was God incarnate in his person? We know that he wrought very marvellous works of divine beneficence and power. We know that he did and said things which would lead people to understand that he meant he was God. We know that once, when he was challenged by the high-priest to say whether he was the Son of the ever-blessed God, he affirmed that he was, for which he was denounced as guilty of blasphemy, and worthy of death.

But were these divine attributes, after all, ascribed to him in a modified way, or as strict realities? Was he only a sort of Deity—a Deity by courtesy? Had he a kind of deified humanity, or was he really and truly God?



Now, in tracing the history of Jesus back to the time of his birth, we find that it was attended by many extraordinary circumstances, and that it was not like the birth of human beings in general. His nativity was thus announced by the angel to the person who was to become his mother: the angel said to her, "Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke i. 30-33). And, to give some further explanation of this mysterious announcement (for it was made to a virgin), "The angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore, also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke i. 35). And it is stated to us, also, in the history of this same transaction as presented to us by Matthew, that "when as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. i. 18). So that it seems that the human nature of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was produced, not only in a way singular and peculiar, and distinguished from the human nature of every other individual of the whole human race, but, also, in a way especially adapted to its being conjoined with the divine nature from the very origin of its existence.

We have a passage in prophecy to this effect, in the seventh chapter of the prophecies of Isaiah, and the fourteenth verse: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. vii. 14): the precise applicability—the direct applicability—of which to the subject before us is fully established by the observation of Bishop Lowth: "They shall call his name Immanuel," says he, "which is, being interpreted, or translated, God with us: *El* being in the Hebrew tongue the term for *God*, and *Immanu* the pronoun, or prefix, which has the meaning of '*God with us.*'" So that here, in the name of Jesus thus formed, is a distinct declaration of two natures subsisting in

his one person; "God with us," God in human flesh. And in the sixth verse of the ninth chapter we have a passage referring to the same subject, and to the same effect: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace" (Isa. vi. 9). Matthew makes a reference to the former of these prophecies: "Now all this was done," says that evangelist—referring to the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—"Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us" (Matt. i. 22, 23). The evidence of the Holy Scriptures is very distinct, direct, and incontestable, therefore, as to the fact that, in the one person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, two natures existed in personal combination, the human and the divine.

And with this fact harmonize those appellations, both human and divine, by which our Lord Jesus Christ is indiscriminately named. He is called in the first promise "the seed of the woman" (Gen. iii. 15), that is, a man; and he is distinctly in the Old Testament called Jehovah (Psalm ii. 11; Isaiah xl. 3)—a name not at all applicable by any possibility, except he were God. One of the apostles calls him "the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii. 5); another says, "He is the true God, and eternal life" (1 John v. 20). This indiscriminate use of names, both divine and human, would be altogether a matter of impropriety and absurdity, if it were not that the two natures, divine as well as human, were combined in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. And, if the two natures be combined in his person, you may with justice call him by any name, either human or divine; just in the same way as, the mortal and the immortal part being combined in a man, you may address him by either—as mortal or immortal; you may say *mortal man*, or you may say *immortal man*; there is no sort of contradiction, both are equally true; for, in relation to the bodies of men they are mortal, they are immortal in relation to the soul. So, in addressing the Lord Jesus Christ, you may call him *man*, and it is true; you may call him *God*, and it is true; for the two natures are

both essentially combined in the one person of our adorable Redeemer.

I know not whether it may be expected that I should attempt to enter into any physical, or metaphysical, explanation, in relation to the mysterious person of our Lord Jesus Christ, so composed of two natures, the human and the divine. On this subject I say at once I am not prepared to enter, or to attempt any such explanation. I do not know anything about the matter; and, however interesting to the inquisitive and curious mind a question of this sort may be, I cannot conceive that any one can be called upon to give an explanation upon this point in order to establish the truth of the doctrine itself. If the doctrine were one of our own invention, then this question might be asked concerning it, and we might be expected to furnish further information; but to make any pretension to discovery by any manner of reasoning or speculation, whether physical or metaphysical, would be absurd in the extreme. It is a doctrine of pure revelation; and it is only because it is revealed in this book that we can know, or believe, anything about it. God himself has told us so, and we believe it to be so. And, if there be any party who seems inclined to attack this truth, it must not be by singling out this doctrine of revelation for the assault, but it must be by attacking the whole book, and the authority of the book, which contains it. This individual truth does not stand by itself; it stands with a host of other truths as in a fortified and embattled castle, and no man can assail this truth till he climbs upon the heights, and scales the battlements which protect it. This is a matter of revealed truth alone; and we may well challenge any persons to make an assault upon it, or on the authority of the Word of God.

That we have before us a mysterious truth we acknowledge; but, if any man is disposed to reject it because it is mysterious, we ask him if he means to reject one truth only because it is mysterious, and not another. We certainly deny his reasonable right to do this; if anything is to be rejected on account of its mysteriousness, all things that are mysterious must be rejected together. Mystery is not to be made an objection to one truth, while it is made no objection to another to which it equally attaches. If we reject any matter because it is mysterious, we ought to reject all

others which are mysterious; and, if any man sees well to reject all truths that are mysterious, he will undertake a large business. His own existence is in itself a mystery, the existence of God is a mystery, the existence of anything at all is a mystery; and he that will believe nothing that is mysterious really must believe nothing at all. And then he will encounter new mysteries, perhaps still greater mysteries, and, perhaps, as great a mystery as any is that he refuses to believe, in that he himself, being in the midst of plain and incontestable facts, will not believe that any of those facts exist.

But, leaving the argument concerning this matter, we come, in the next place, to take a brief view of the beautiful and glorious aspect of the truth, or fact, thus set before us. "The Word was made flesh:" that is, in the person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ there was a combination of two natures, the human and the divine.

I. Now let us regard this, in the first place, as presenting a beautiful, and an amazing, exemplification of *the creative wisdom and power of God*. There is something very wonderful in all God's works. The sky, the sea, the earth, the flowers, the animals—all are wonderful. There is not any one which can be selected in order to be inspected and analyzed, without presenting marvellous views of the glory of God. And more wonderful than anything else beside on the earth is the nature and the structure of man. We not only have, as is the case with animals, a body and a spirit—(for so we must conceive of animals, I suppose; the spirit of the animal being united in some strange way to the body, receiving sensation by the body, and exerting its own powers by the instrumentality of the body)—but in ourselves we have a *rational soul*, capable of moral knowledge, of holy and pure affections, and of exercising thoughts and feelings on things exalted and sublime; the soul connected with the body, receiving all its sensations through the body, thinking by the help of the brain, acting by the instrumentality of the arm, having the body as a little and compact box of machinery—of wonderful and delicate machinery—for the exercise of its powers, and the performance of its will. But now look at the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. His divine nature, of course, is not created; but it was an exercise of creating power and



wisdom to construct the *entire* person of our Lord Jesus Christ, so as to bring the human nature into combination with the divine—so that the divine nature should receive sensations through the eye, the touch, and the ear—so that the divine nature should perform its functions of thinking by the brain, of seeing by the eye, of communicating its thoughts by the tongue, and of acting by the hand. Such a combination as this was necessary in order that God should act by this human nature, and this material machinery. And of all the marvellous things, of all the *incredible* things (if they were not *true*), which divine wisdom and power have done, this of them all is the most marvellous. Dr. Watts has, indeed, well said upon this subject—

“God, in the person of his Son,  
Hath all his mightiest works outdone.”

Between the body and the soul of man there is a sort of proportion; the soul and the body have a marvellous adaptation the one to the other, although in essential nature they are distinct. But, as respects the human nature and the divine, they are in no manner proportioned. We might have thought that there could be no kind of machinery by which the divine nature could be brought thus to act, and that, if any at all were employed, it must have been a vast, and almost infinite, machinery; for the divine nature itself is infinite, and how could it be compressed into the small compass of a human body, or so reduced as possibly to act by this little, frail machinery, when, perhaps, the very contact of the divine nature with this machinery might consume it, or the vast and overwhelming attributes of the divine nature acting upon this machinery have at once crushed and broken it? But it was not so; for the godhead existed, and acted, even in the babe. Deity was there in all the feebleness of childhood, and infancy was not too frail, or too feeble, to admit of conjunction with infinity, and the majesty of godhead.

II. If, in the first place, here is presented to our view an amazing instance of creative wisdom and power, there is also, in the next place, presented a no less amazing view of *the divine condescension*. How could the Son of God ever harmonize his feelings with the prospect of taking into direct and personal union with himself the nature of man, and of



becoming a man? How could the Creator ever think of condescending to become a creature at all, even if the nature in which he became a creature was one of the most exalted and divine? There was an infinite distinction, as there must always have been an infinite space, or chasm, between the Creator and the creature. But how could the Son of God ever think of becoming *a man*, and of taking upon himself the nature of *sinner*s, and not that of the more exalted and glorious of created natures? We might imagine him saying,—What! shall I whose glance comprehends the universe, shall I see through an eye of clay? shall I hear through the medium of an ear? and my vast and eternal thoughts, shall they be exercised by the activity of a material brain? and my almighty power, shall it have its residence in a feeble arm, and be exercised by it? and my vast and boundless emotions, shall they be identified with the throbs of a human heart? and I, the ever-blessed, shall I enter into a nature in which I shall become liable to hunger, thirst, and weariness? shall I lay me down to sleep? shall I become liable to sorrow and to death—the Eternal become limited in time—the Infinite limited in space—the Author of life subjected to die? shall I, the Lawgiver, become a subject; and take upon me, not the form of a ruler, but that of a servant, and learn, not to command, but to obey? Great prospects indeed for the Son of God! Immeasurable humiliation for Him! But he did it. He divested himself of his glory for us, and was not ashamed. He did not refuse to take upon himself the form of a servant, that he might become obedient, even “obedient unto death.”

III. Again, what a marvellous *manifestation of godhead* was there made in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he was upon earth. The apostle speaks of him in this striking expression—“God manifest in the flesh;” and our Lord’s forerunner said, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him,” or made him manifest. It is one characteristic of the divine Being that he is invisible, and that he is not appreciable by the human eye, save when he is pleased to take some form for that purpose; since it is only *form* which the mortal eye can discern. And so, God being invisible, and being concealed and retired, all our notions of him are necessarily vague, obscure, and difficult.

But, in the person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we have "God manifested"—God to be seen, God to be heard, God to be felt and handled. The character and attributes of God—all the different virtues of love and purity, faithfulness and truth—the glorious attributes of wisdom and power—all these things appear in the Lord Jesus Christ, reduced into a form, not abstract, but concrete. They are visible in action, and may be gazed on, and conversed with; God is "manifest in the flesh." As for God, he is everywhere; there is not throughout the whole universe a place where God is not; but in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ we might almost say that God was *concentrated*—with his glorious attributes brought before the view, made substantial, and presented to man in a way truly marvellous. What an honour was it for this world that God should thus manifest himself in the flesh! What an honour was it for the land of Judea, and the palaces of Jerusalem, thus to be selected as the spot in which this manifestation was made! And what a singular elevation this guilty world, probably, has thus received, amid all the other innumerable worlds contained in the universe, if they know that here God thus personal, and thus manifest, has been pleased to make his appearance among his creatures!

IV. But, further, we see, in this truth, a *special adaptation* in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ *to the work of redemption which he has undertaken*. It was needful, in order to his being a Saviour for man, that he should become man, and his becoming man confers on him a most blessed adaptation to this end. It was thus needful in order that he might acquire a right to redeem. Angels, or beings foreign to our nature, might have stood and contemplated our ruin, and have wished to interfere; but the question must always have been asked of them,—“What is it to you? You have no such relation to them as qualifies you for interfering.” Among the Jews it was provided that, in certain cases, a near kinsman might interfere. And thus, in relation to the salvation effected by our Lord Jesus Christ, it was needful that he should assume our nature in order that he might be akin to us, and that, as a party related to us, he might have an interest in standing on our behalf, in taking up our cause, and in doing that which was necessary to be done for our welfare. It was thus needful that he should be

man. A vicarious obedience and suffering being absolutely needful on our behalf, this was required to be rendered by a person in our nature. And therefore it would have been no appropriate expiation for the guilt of man if an angel had suffered; an angel could not have obeyed the same laws which we had broken. If the law had inflicted penalty on the person of an angel, there could have been no propriety in its being received as an expiation for the sin of man. It was *man* who had disobeyed; and it was only by a man that an appropriate expiation could be made for the transgression. So that our Lord Jesus Christ, had he not become man, could have had no means of rendering the due obedience. As God only he could not have obeyed; he could have had no means of enduring suffering, or of submitting to the law; if he had not assumed the nature of man, he could not have become "the Lord our Righteousness." It is through his having become a man that he has fulfilled the law—actively, by constructing a perfect righteousness—and passively, by enduring the whole of its penalties. And so is there a perfect adaptation in this respect conferred on his obedience and death—a perfect adaptation, by which he becomes a fitting expiatory sacrifice for sin.

In the perfection of his character as our great High Priest, also, the human nature of Christ is a necessary element. "For every high priest," says the apostle, "is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer" (Heb. viii. 3). Now it was his human nature, and this alone, which Christ as an high priest had to offer; and, in the suffering to which this was subjected, he "offered himself without spot to God." He thus became both the priest and the sacrifice; "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

V. Further, the human nature of our Lord Jesus Christ opens to us the most delightful and encouraging view, as *adapted to engage the confidence, and to inspire the loving trust, of those whom he came to redeem*. There is something, when we try to realize God as apart from human nature, that is vast, vague, and awful. But, when we see God in human flesh, when he is spoken of to us as a man, when he thus interposes for our redemption, and comes in the aspect of a relative and a brother, as a partaker of the same nature; and of a being identified with us, as one who has thrown

himself into the midst of our sorrows that he may lift us out of them, and made himself liable to the evils and dangers of our condition, we gain encouragement. We should have had an awful fear of God in the abstract, which would have kept us at a distance from him; but, when thus we see God in the person of his Son, as God-man, coming to us as a brother and as a friend, we can love him, because we know that he can sympathize with us. When we find the Son of God thus come so near to us, we see at once that he is indeed "Immanuel," "God with us;" not only "with us" in fact and in nature, but "with us" in heart and in spirit. Then we can trust him, then we must love him; and, with his hand in ours, we can go, even from the gates of hell itself, all the way to heaven, and through all that long and dreary path of tears by which we have to make our final arrival there.

VI. In the last place, *what glories are prepared for that human nature* which our Lord and Saviour has taken into this wonderful union with his divinity! Had it not been for this, we should have seen man only upon earth, only in scenes of humiliation, of sorrow, and of degradation; but the human nature, which our blessed Lord assumed in his own person—this it is which we see exalted in honour and glory. There is One who appears as a Mediator before God, who stands in his presence, and makes a prevailing intercession for us. Who is it? It is a Man. There is One who sits on the throne of universal empire, and to whom all things give witness both in heaven and in earth. Who is it? It is a Man. There shall be One sitting on the throne of judgment at the last, before whom all nations shall be gathered, and who shall "divide them one from another, as the shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." Who shall that be? It shall be a Man. There shall be One who shall take the redeemed by the hand, and present them at last with unspeakable joy before the glory of his Father. Who shall that be? It shall be a Man. There shall be One who shall sit upon the throne of heaven, in whose presence all joy, and love, and eternal blessing, shall be found, One from whose person shall emanate all the sunshine and the majesty of Deity and of heaven. Who shall that be? It shall be a Man. It is One selected from no race but our own, a specimen of no nature but ours; the only One who could have lifted us from those

depths of sin and sorrow, and almost of hell, into which we had sunk. O! race of the redeemed! You shall at last see your own nature on the throne of glory, and recognize that God as your brother, as well as your Lord.

It was when the Lord Jesus Christ was born into the world that was realized the prophecy which told of "IMMANUEL," of "God with us:" it was when the angel announced, "Unto you is born a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord;" and when the heavenly hosts sang, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men." Those songs which began with his birth shall never end. His immortal nature shall for ever wear our form, and for ever engage our praise.

"O may we live to reach the place,  
Where he unveils his lovely face;  
There all his beauties to behold,  
And sing his name to harps of gold!"



## THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S WAYS.\*

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"Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour."—*Isaiah* xlv. 15.

THIS exclamation breaks from the lips of the prophet Isaiah, when he has been contemplating those ways of God towards his people Israel which he had as a prophet to announce. He owns that God is "the God of Israel," and "the Saviour" thereof; and yet his mind seems impressed with the fact, that, if he is "the God of Israel" and "the Saviour," he does some things scarcely in apparent consistency with that character. How many times, for example, did he abandon his people Israel to their enemies! and how was he about to suffer them to be led captive into Babylon for a long threescore years and ten! And, even when his ways to them were evidently merciful and kind, God's acts of kindness came at times under circumstances, in ways, and by persons, that could not have been looked for; making his very mercies as surprising on the one hand, as his judgments might have been on the other. "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself," says Isaiah—that hidest thy counsels, thy mercies, thy methods of operation—"thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour." Thy ways are not all easy to be traced; thy counsels not all manifest.

A reflection of this sort might, with full as much justice, arise from a contemplation of the ways of God towards his spiritual Israel; a people to whom he is attached by still stronger ties than those which bound him to Israel of old. He is, in the spiritual sense, "the God of Israel, the Saviour;" *our* God and *our* Saviour, we hope (many of us), as a part of the spiritual Israel. Precious is his mercy, large

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are his promises, boundless his love; and yet how severe some of his dealings appear! How he "scourgeth the sons whom he receiveth"! How he lacerates the hearts of his children, and rends the tenderest ties, and leaves them sometimes bereft and solitary, mourning and sad! "Verily he is a God that hideth himself." And his mercies, too—how strangely sometimes they come! as though he would choose the unlikeliest of all circumstances, the darkest of all seasons, the most improbable of all means, for communicating them; as though he would make us have mercies when we expect trials, and find that out of the darkest cloud there proceeds the brightest sunshine. "Verily he is a God that hideth himself." And he works strange things—things not apparently, not manifestly, congruous, or reconcilable, with his character of covenant friendship and love.

Nor is there any peculiarity at all attaching itself to this part of the ways and administration of God. The same feature of the divine conduct may be seen wherever else we look, whether at home, or taking a wider and more excursive circle. If, for example, we look at the works of nature, there is the same thing. We understand that God hath made living creatures that living creatures may be happy; and that his object in multiplying sentient beings, beings that can feel, is that pleasure may be multiplied also; this is the benevolent, the wise, design in his creation of beings that are capable of happiness. And yet, if you look at the animal world, among a great many indications and evidences that their structure, position, and circumstances, are intended to produce happiness among them, you have this striking, and apparently contradictory, fact—that about one half the animal world prey upon the other half; that innocent, simple-hearted, things (so to speak) are just born and brought up to become the prey of the voracious remainder; the lion and the tiger, the eagle and the vulture, the shark and the spider—you have them everywhere, a set of voracious monsters satiating their hunger upon their fellow-creatures. Herein is a mystery; a matter in which God "hideth himself," and blends with manifest operations of a benevolent kind one that confounds us, and makes us ask how his benevolence can consist with this.

Or look at man. Look at the body of man; made in marvellous wisdom, with a thousand adaptations for physical

action; and yet this very body of man is seized upon by several thousand diseases, that rack, and inflame, and chill, and heat, and torment it, as though it were their domain and home. Look at the mind of man; made to be, adapted to be, a source of innumerable, incessant, delights; and yet to what a vast extent it is the prey of ignorance, pride, anger, jealousy, rage, and impure, wicked, and tormenting passions: as though the breast of man, whatever God meant it for, were become a sort of Pandemonium, a nest of serpents and scorpions!

Look at human society. You see social affections in play, and the various circumstances in which men are placed adapted and prepared for their most delightful exercise, so that even trying circumstances are fitted for calling into exercise the liveliest and happiest affections; but yet, what is human society? You may call it *Aceldama*, a field of blood; a sphere in which the weak are trampled upon by the strong; in which violence, fraud, rapine, envy, plunder, the sword, and all instruments of moral and physical mischief, are brought to bear upon the destruction of the welfare and the life of men.

And God's providence. Why, God's providence is to be taken to be a system of wise, and holy, and beneficent administration; and yet what is it, when you look at it? There are many appearances, indeed, of its being so; but there are many dark things in it that one cannot at all understand. Sin and wickedness, pride, and tyranny, and wrong—these ought to be connected with suffering and punishment, but yet how often they triumph! And the gentle, and the upright, and the virtuous—these should have a vindicator and defender; but how often they seem to be abandoned to poverty and despair!

Or if you take a wider view still, and contemplate the ways of God in this world—the view in which it becomes the theatre for his interposition in redemption through his dear Son, what a mystery is here! God made man upright—made a world for holiness, for happiness, for virtue, for religion; but into what a condition the world comes before it affords him opportunity for redemption! Why, the whole world is contaminated, polluted; the world becomes a theatre of sin and rebellion; and God, with all his love, is obliged to come forth with a curse, and reveal

wrath from heaven against the universal impiety and injustice of men. The earth itself becomes a sort of nursery for hell; a spot where thousands and thousands of men, age after age, do but sport themselves in sin—do but educate themselves for damnation. And yet the great, the good, the gracious, the wise, the holy God—he does such things as these. “Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.”

Now views of this sort are painful in two ways. In the first place, they give occasion to men of sceptical minds—men who are glad enough to find any occasion of raising an objection against the ways or character of God, and are determined to stumble over some stone or other into hell, if they can—to think and to say hard things; they feed and nourish the enmity of their hearts against God. Besides, views of this sort give occasion to many painful thoughts, to many feelings of difficulty and amazement, in the friends and children of God.

And yet there are considerations by which the painfulness of such views as these may be greatly diminished. There are thoughts by which the mystery that attends God's ways may be put into a light less afflicting and disturbing, while there is intrinsic value and preciousness in those thoughts themselves. And it is for the purpose of setting before you two or three thoughts of this class that I have taken the subject which engages us this morning.

1. The first of them is—That, taking the case at the very worst, and at the greatest amount, it is nothing but a case of difficulty.

The ways of God are in some respects such as cannot be understood, they are difficult of explanation. *That* we admit; but no more. It is not that the ways of God are in any case such as yield proof, or demonstration, of ill. There is no case from whence anything like a conclusive argument can be drawn against the wisdom, the goodness, or the holiness of God. There is no kind of proof—no infidel ever pretended that from any part of his ways a proof could be derived—that God was unwise, or unholy, or unkind. All that is to be said is—Upon a general presumption and admission that God is wise, and kind, and holy, here are some things that present startling difficulties, that cannot be explained in consistency with these views.



Well, it is one very happy consideration that the matter can be reduced to this limit; that we have not to contend with cases which are supposed to afford evidence of want of wisdom, holiness, or goodness in God; that it is only a difficulty.

It is admitted at the same time that these difficulties may, for aught that appears, admit of a wise and happy solution. For example, with respect to the animal world, and one part of it preying upon another: that is a difficulty in connexion with the goodness of God in creating the animal world, but it is not a proof that in creating the animal world God was actuated by malignity; and it may be shown us hereafter that the fact is quite reconcilable with the goodness of God in creating that portion of his works. So with respect to man, and with respect to that which is confessedly the greatest mystery of all, the introduction of sin into the world: we cannot at present see how this is reconcilable with the wisdom, the holiness, and the goodness of God, but we may see it hereafter. The whole case, therefore, is one of undeveloped plan—one of unfinished process—one of partial ignorance, of defective knowledge; and all that is at present inexplicable about the ways of God may, for aught we know, be done away, and the whole may appear as bright and beautiful, as consistent with holiness, and wisdom, and goodness, as anything we do understand, or seem to understand.

2. Then, in the second place, the observation is to be made—That we have no reason at all to complain of the difficulties—the kind and degree of mystery—that now attach to the ways of God, nor any reason to expect it should be otherwise.

The mystery which thus attaches to the ways of God arises in part from physical, or natural, causes. In fact, there is an impossibility of its being removed. And this arises out of the great diversity of knowledge and understanding that exists betwixt God and ourselves. Two persons between whom there is a great diversity of knowledge, will find always that this diversity of knowledge gives rise to mystery. Here, for example, is a very clever mechanic; he makes steam-engines, or he makes lace-machines: well, I know nothing either of steam-engines, or of lace-machines; if I look at one of them I am baffled



utterly; and, if I ask him to explain it to me, it is a very little of it indeed that he can explain. Why? Through my ignorance as compared with his knowledge. Take a still stronger case than this, as that between man and the brutes. Suppose one of the birds of the air were to set himself to ponder some of the works of men, and to say, in his bird-like twitter, that he could not understand them; why, he is only a bird, and it is not likely he can understand the operations of a man. Now that case is not at all too strong for our object. We are looking at the ways of *God*; and the faculties of a bird to the ways of man are, I suppose, quite as competent as the faculties of man to the ways of God. If we had as much knowledge as God has, we might understand God's ways; but, with the vastness of God's knowledge and the feebleness and smallness of our own, it is an utter impossibility that we should. If they be the ways of *God*, they *must* be mysterious through the very imperfection and smallness of our knowledge. We have, therefore, no reason to complain. A complaint of mystery is, in other words, repining that God's knowledge is larger than our own.

And then, in the next place, as this mystery arises in part from the smallness of our knowledge, so it arises in part from the unfavourableness of our position even for making use of what means of knowledge we have. We do not stand so in relation to God and his ways as to take the most clear and favourable view of them. This kind of mystery existed for a very long while with reference to the science of astronomy, for example. Astronomers were talking of the motion of the sun and the moon, the planets and the heavenly bodies, and they seemed all in a tangle—twisted everlastingly; and they found at last that the tangled character of the motion of the heavenly bodies resulted from this circumstance—that they were looking on from the earth: an astronomer, in some lucky moment, hit upon the thought of conceiving himself in the sun; and, imagining himself there, he found that, from the sun, the movements of the stars are all very plain, and there is not a tangle among them. Now just so we are looking upon the ways of God from the earth: let us wait till we get to a better position. When the time comes that we stand in **THE SUN** (if I may so say)—stand in the centre of God's universe—we shall find all very plain, perhaps. At all events, things

will be much clearer then; the change of our position will very much assist our acquisition of knowledge.

And then, thirdly, we have no reason to complain of this mystery, because God, as the governor of the world, has a right to work in mystery and darkness. Why, my Lord Palmerston works in darkness; the foreign Secretary of the English government works in mystery. How the world would laugh at him if he did not! if he let all men, friends or foes, know what he was about! And is the Governor of all things to have no mysteries? "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing;" and that he can form designs, and work them out, and defy the whole universe to penetrate them, or to know what he means to do, till he sees fit to disclose his plan in all its completeness, and lay bare its beauty in the eyes of all—there is his glory as a governor. And there is not any one of his friendly subjects that will ever complain of this.

And there is, also, a fourth reason; namely, that the processes of God's government, as respecting ourselves, have a probationary and disciplinary design. It is as arising out of their mysteriousness that many of the ways of God are trying, and fitted to the improvement of our character. Proceedings that are mysterious cannot be traced; they call for trust, and are exercises of confidence. It would be little to walk all the way to heaven with God, if we could understand him in every step that he took. Our ground of trust and confidence, and of the honour that we so do him, is that he is leading us as "the blind by a way that we know not." To take away the mystery of God's dealings with us, were to take away the ground on which he requires faith and trust, and calls upon us to render him some of the chief honours he receives from us on earth.

This, then, is the second observation: that we have no cause to complain of the mystery which attaches now to the ways of God; there are good reasons for it.

3. The third observation I make, is this—That the wisdom, holiness, and goodness of God are, in point of fact, established so firmly by solid proofs and arguments, that not all the mystery which attaches to the ways of God at present can ever disturb the conclusion.

It is not as though there were enough really to shake our confidence in him, to bring his character into any grave, or

real, question. Whatever force there may be in certain circumstances, or parts of God's ways, to fill us with a feeling of mystery and inexplicableness, when we come really to the character of God, its wisdom, holiness, and goodness, are established by proofs so clear, so irrefragable, that they cannot be doubted. Here are a thousand times stronger proofs that God is wise, and holy, and good, than can be derived on the contrary side from the mystery of God's ways. If you take, for example, the functions of the animal world and the relation of various tribes to one another, their position and circumstances in the world, and the provision made in the world for their supply and comfort—the aptitude of the bird to make its nest, and of every creature to provide for its own welfare—here is demonstration that the Creator meant kindness. The voracity of one part of the animal creation in preying upon another is a difficulty; but it would be far more absurd to put the difficulty foremost, and take it for the main principle established in the face of all other evidence, than to admit the kindness from the multiplied proofs there are of it, and to allow this as a difficulty only.

And so with respect to all the other cases. To confine myself to the chief case—the admission of evil into the world—the consequences of sin; however the permission of sin, the dominion of it, and its grievous consequences in the ruin of such multitudes of men, may go to make us think—"Well, can God be wise, to make a world like this? can God be holy, to permit sin to ravage his dominions? can God be good, to have created beings so many of whom will perish for ever?"—bring the question whether God is wise, is holy, is good, to the cross of Christ, and ask it there. Look into the very person of Jesus Christ; look into the plan of salvation; see what a method is there devised for providing a sacrifice for transgression, and for the reconciliation of rebels—the justification of the condemned, the sanctification of the impure, the glorification of the lost, and the balancing of evil results from sin by at least equal results of glory from redemption. See here if God be not wise. The plan of redemption the product of a man?—of a fool? There is not a being in existence but God that could have conceived ideas so beautiful, a plan so perfect. It stands for every rational being that can apprehend it to gaze on, and

admire. No; the God that devised this plan is infinitely wise; and, if there be anything in his ways that looks like folly, it must be only because the wisdom of it is not yet visible.

Look again at the cross of Christ, and ask there if God be not holy. God has let so much sin into the world that one might say, "He does not seem to care about sin." Does he not? See what he speaks concerning it in the cross of Christ. It was to manifest his displeasure against sin, to manifest his holiness, that he slew his Son—slew his Son! Oh! he hates sin with a perfect hatred. The damnation of the whole world would never have been an equal demonstration of his hatred of sin with the slaying of his Son. He *does* hate sin; and, however there may be a difficulty attaching to the ill that he has allowed sin to cause in this world, it is only a difficulty. The holiness of God stands blazingly demonstrated in the cross of his Son, notwithstanding this difficulty.

Or, again, at the cross of Christ ask the question whether God is good—whether he hath an interest in the happiness of his creatures. See there; that sinners might be released, and the lost reclaimed, and the condemned made happy, he gave his only Son, and spared him not. There may be many very dark things in God's providence, many scenes of suffering arising from the admission of sin; very possibly—but all this never, never, can call in question whether God is good, so long as there remains unforgotten by men the fact of the gift of his Son for the world.

And it is so throughout. The demonstration of the wisdom, the holiness, the goodness, of God's character is so overpowering, that it reduces all these matters of mystery to a small amount; we shut them up under this one general trifling item—they are difficulties in the ways of him who is manifestly, beyond question, the wisest, the best, the holiest, of beings.

4. Fourthly, when we look at such parts of God's ways as are already finished, we see the mystery disappear from them: however, if they had been looked at in their progress, they would have seemed very mysterious, and difficult to be understood, when they are finished they appear wise, and kind, and good. For some parts of God's ways, though small comparatively, *are* finished.



Look at the history of Joseph, for example, from the time when he provoked the jealousy of his brethren; and trace his course through the pit where it was likely he would have died—through the hands of the slave-dealers that bought him—in the dungeon where he lay—up to the right hand of the throne of Pharaoh—where he accomplished, through divine providence, the most marvellous results. Look at the case of Job; the apostle notices it, you know, in this way—“Ye have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.” Ah! brethren, wherever we do “see the end of the Lord”—the end he had in view, the end to which he brings things, the consummation of his plan—we see it is one with himself. The mystery? it is like a cloud, which, as you look upon a prospect, lowers over it; the shadow of it darkens the road, makes the way mysterious, but the place beyond is in the sunshine. Bright is the home, though dark be the way; and the cloud that darkens the road—what is it but a momentary intervention, a hiding of the sun that diminishes nothing from his lustre, or from the certainty that the traveller shall reach his home? The mystery attaches to the middle of God's ways; let him finish them, and they will be plain.

Now from one judge all of the ways of God. If, in cases in which God's ways are finished, we see the mystery disappear, and the end explain all, we may expect just the same result when all shall be finished. He that now, as he finishes his ways in part, shows each part in beauty, is preparing by these parts, each of which is beautiful, to construct a whole the beauty of which shall be consummate and complete. Let him go on. When it is all done what shall we have to say? Only this: “Thou hast done all things well.”

5. Finally, there is some force in a thought of this kind: that the mystery which now attaches to the ways of God must be effectually and completely done away hereafter, because God himself (if one may speak it reverently) stands as a candidate for the applause of the universe.

He is working out his designs in the presence of beings whom he has made capable of understanding them in part; ourselves, for example, and the devils, and the angels in heaven. He is working out his designs in the presence of critical judges. Not that it is of any consequence to God, one may say, what we think of his ways; but yet, inasmuch



as God has made us capable of appreciating his ways, and of deriving emotions from understanding them (either glorious or otherwise), there can be no question but that God means to stand well in the judgment of creatures whom he has thus made capable of judging. He has never made us capable of appreciating what is wise, and holy, and good, without an intention that his ways should correspond with these ideas; that all our thoughts of adoration and love may blend themselves ultimately in the revenue of glory he means to receive at our hands. Our notions of what is wise, and holy, and good, are radically and elementarily right—are an emanation from God's own being—from God's own heart; and he means that, when his works shall be all consummated, they shall engage the profound admiration, the holy worship, of these minds and hearts of ours, which he has made so to feel, so to think, so to judge. Ours are the hearts that are to adore him, ours are the lips that are to praise him, mingling with those of angels and of beings from innumerable worlds besides. He is to be praised. That is to be the consummation; it is for his own glory that all things "are, and were created." In the end they will be unveiled; enough will be discovered to us concerning all his ways hereafter, to secure the universal tribute of adoration and gratitude that is to be rendered as his due.

Now for the result, then, of these thoughts. They avail to relieve the pain arising from a contemplation of the mystery of God's ways. And, to bring them to a practical improvement, let me say—

First, that we may learn hence the infinite importance of a spirit of friendship with God. And there are two views to be taken of this.

A spirit of friendship with God is of great importance, in the first place, because it is only in the spirit of a friend that his character can be justly viewed. An enemy to God—any man who wishes to find grounds of objection, who wants to stumble—will find plenty of stumbling-blocks. There is food enough for an infidel, sceptical, disposition. He who wants occasions for objections against the wisdom, and holiness, and goodness, of God, will find them. God has left them in his ways. He challenges the examination of his ways in the spirit of a friend; but he leaves difficulties in them, to furnish any man who wishes to go to hell with a pretext for

going there. He puts every man to the test—to the test of a right spirit. It is only in the spirit of friendship that any man can fairly judge of his character. A spirit of alienation and enmity blackens everything, and makes a man derive more sources of objection from the difficulties of God's ways than of confidence from their prevailing character. I pray every one of you, if you are concerned to judge truly of God's ways, to cultivate a spirit of friendship with God. Do not come to him as a willing objector, but look on his ways as a friend, if you would form any correct judgment. Prejudice and alienation destroy all chance of a fair conclusion.

And, in the next place, friendship with God is of importance, also, because of the very fact of the mystery of his ways. God's way to *yourself* will be mysterious; and how can you bear to be in the hands of a Being whose ways are mysterious, without being sure that he is your friend? You will not be able to judge of God's ways concerning you; they will be dark; you cannot trace them; he will lead you as one that is blind. Oh! how can you bear to have to say—"This God is leading me as a blind man by ways that I cannot trace; perhaps I am his enemy, and perhaps he is mine; I have no security for his kind treatment. He is leading me as a blind man, perhaps he is laying upon me his wrath, and the way in which he leads me may be one in which I shall perish!" Oh! what blind man is there who would ever consent to be led by one whom he did not suppose to be his friend? Suppose that you were a blind man, and you wanted to be led through a difficult and dangerous way, and there was one saying, "I will lead you." You would not be so blind as that. You would say—"Who are you? Perhaps you may be an enemy of mine, who may do me mischief; or, perhaps, you may be a careless person, who may let me get into danger." The blind man will wish to be led by a *friend*; by one to whom he may say, "I will trust myself with *you*, because I know you will lead me right." Ah! how is it that you, being blind as to the ways of providence—you who must be led by God—can bear to be in a position so critical, so awful, without being able to say, "This God is my God for ever and ever, he will be my guide even unto death"? To think that he calls upon you to be reconciled to him, and you, perhaps, are not reconciled!

You can be content to march on in blackness so cheerless now, to "blackness of darkness for ever"!

Secondly, the friends of God should learn to trust him with unshaken confidence. We should not be shaken at all by the objections of the infidel; we have grounds for trust and confidence, security that God's character is all that it should be. We should not be shaken or disquieted by the meditations of our own hearts; come back, and come home, to the conclusive proofs of God's glorious character—wisdom, and holiness, and goodness—and rest there, and give him time to work out his own plan. The time for fretting, dear friends, is not come yet; if you fret, fret when you get to heaven. It is too soon yet. You do not know what God means to do, or why he acts as he is acting. Be satisfied, rather, that, if you knew as much as God knows, your judgment would not at all differ from his. You think now, that, if you could, you would alter God's ways; you would bring the millennium a great deal sooner, you would have Jesus Christ come down at once, and put an end to all these evils—ay, that you would. It is the dictate of a kind heart, I do not doubt, but it is the dictate of a small understanding. If you knew all that God knows, and were as wise as God is, you would let providences be just as dark, and afflictions just as heavy. Trust him. He is "a God that hideth himself," but he is not a God unwise, or unkind. The best, the holiest, the most glorious reasons actuate him; the best, the holiest, the most glorious results shall follow. Do not interfere with him one instant, nor one hair. Trust him; and endeavour to trust him cheerfully—without repining, without fear. It is wisdom, it is mercy, all. Even—

"The clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy," —

and not with wrath. He deserves this at our hands; and it is one of the honours that we are to render him in this dark and mysterious world.

Finally, let us anticipate with joy the world that is to come. We know something of revelation—of discovery—now; but the world to come is to be a world of revelation altogether—a world of unveiling, of discovering, things in their beginnings, things in their bearings, things in their conclusion. The world to come will be the time (so to speak)

for God's turning towards us the tapestry which he is working. We see now the many colours, but we see the rough edges, the imperfect figures, the back of the tapestry; wait till you see the front! Then the outline, the filling up, the colouring—all is to appear; and God, in his brightest wisdom, and in his richest love, and in his purest holiness, is to shine in it all. Yes, it is to come. "That which is in part" shall be done away, and "that which is perfect" shall come. Concerning all God's dealings with *us* it is to come. We shall see in everything what we can approve, admire, and love. Concerning all his dealings with others the same is to come. He is "wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working;" and, when the darkness shall have passed away, and the end shall have arrived, he will give to us all who are his friends reason to spend eternity in adoring contemplation, and ceaseless praise.

## “THE MESSENGERS OF THE CHURCHES, AND THE GLORY OF CHRIST.”\*

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“Whether . . . our brethren be inquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.”—2 *Cor.* viii. 23.

THE facts were these. Paul had been raising money for the poor saints in Judea ; and, in order to guard himself against suspicion, he had made arrangements for sending it thither by the hands of selected brethren. In his first epistle to the church at Corinth, he had engaged their co-operation in this work of love under the condition that their liberality should be conveyed to Jerusalem by persons whom they themselves should appoint ; but now he intimates that he was sending two brethren otherwise chosen to perform this duty, and that he had added Titus to the party, in order to animate them to a prompt completion of their contribution. In announcing this change of his purpose, the apostle did not forget the character of the church he was addressing, or overlook the possible, if not probable, resentment of the factious party who had given him so much trouble. “What has Titus to do with this business ?” they might ask ; “and who are these strangers ?” To these anticipated questions he gives, in the verse from which our text is taken, the following answer :—“Whether any do inquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow-helper concerning you ; or our brethren be inquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.” In calling them “the messengers of the churches,” the apostle intimated that they had been chosen by other churches, although not by the Corinthian, to convey the bounty of

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\* Preached before the Baptist Missionary Society, at Finsbury Chapel, January 7th, 1846, on occasion of the death of the Rev. W. Yates, D.D., of Calcutta, and the Rev. W. Knibb, of Jamaica.



the Gentile Christians to their Jewish brethren. In further calling them "the glory of Christ," he uses an expressive term, which might seem at first sight to be capable of being developed into some interesting and beautiful thoughts; upon examination, however, the idea appears to be simply this—that the brethren of whom he speaks were of known devotedness to the glory of Christ, and had been conspicuously instrumental in promoting it. Of one of them, indeed (supposed to be Luke), the praise was in all the churches; and the other (supposed to be Apollos) had oftentimes been proved diligent and trustworthy by the apostle himself. The confidence, therefore, which was now reposed in them could not be regarded as misplaced.

The passage I have read I have deemed not unsuitable as an introduction to the present discourse, the object of which is to improve those solemn and affecting dispensations of divine providence, by which two beloved brethren have recently been removed from the missionary field. Concerning them the questions may naturally be proposed, Who were they? and what are their claims to so distinguished a commemoration? The words of the apostle furnish our reply, "If our brethren be inquired of, they were the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ." Let us dwell for a moment on the elements of this answer.

1. They were "the glory of Christ;" in other words, they were the instruments for promoting his glory. To this purpose their lives were devoted; in common, indeed, with all Christians, but with a peculiar emphasis also, inasmuch as they had been led to undertake the arduous duties, and to encounter the multiform perils, of the missionary calling. Nor was their devotedness in vain. The Redeemer whom they loved was graciously pleased to accept and own it, by making them both instrumental in no ordinary degree to the advancement of his cause.

2. If, as I trust, we deeply sympathize with our departed brethren on this ground, it will still more closely connect them with ourselves to regard them as "the messengers of the churches." Unaccomplished as the great commission is, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," the churches of Christ have felt that they themselves had a duty to do; a duty, however, which could not be performed by them in the mass, but one which required

individual consecration and sacrifice. Looking on the heathen world, and hearkening at length, with heaving bosom, to the long-neglected cry of the perishing, "Come over, and help us!" they asked, "Whom shall we send? And who will go for us?" The precious dead were among those who answered to this appeal. First one and then the other of them said, "Here am I, send me." And the churches accepted their dedication. They went, not so much for themselves as for us. It was their business to speak in our name, to toil on our behalf, to represent us to the nations. Their labours were undertaken in order to effect the discharge of our duty, and the dangers they braved were encountered in our stead.

3. To these considerations another may be added, tending still further to show the propriety of the present service. In the points hitherto noticed the deceased brethren exhibit no peculiarity; they formed only part of a large and inestimable band of whom the same things may be said. Wherefore, then, it may be asked, are they thus commemorated beyond their brethren? Not, certainly, on account of any personal preference, or on any ground of invidious selection: but partly because, as will be admitted on all hands, they have attained, in their respective spheres of operation, an unrivalled eminence; and partly because the removal, not of one only, but of two such distinguished agents of the Society within so short a period—it may also be said, at the same period—constitutes an era, if not a crisis, in its history. "God hath spoken once; yea, twice:" and it becomes us with unwonted solemnity, under these circumstances, to receive instruction at his hands.

With a view, then, to prepare our way to the reflections which the solemn events we commemorate are adapted to suggest, I proceed to present to you a slight and hurried sketch—it is all that the time permits—of the men whose loss we deplore.

Dr. YATES, to whom the earlier period of his death turns our attention in the first instance, was born on the 15th of December, 1792, at Loughborough, where also he was baptized on a profession of his faith in Christ, at a period anterior to his fourteenth year. At the early age I have named, a sermon which he heard on God's ability to provide agents for evangelizing the world melted him to tears, and

gave birth to a deep and solemn purpose of devotedness of which his whole subsequent life was the development. Like Dr. Carey, his great precursor, he was brought up a shoemaker, differing from him, however, in being, what Carey was not, an expert workman. Yates combined with his duty to his last a diligent attendance at a grammar school; and, having been encouraged to turn his thoughts to the ministry, in his twentieth year he applied for admission into the Baptist College at Bristol. Here his capabilities, veiled, but not concealed, by an eminently modest and retiring manner, were soon appreciated. Fulfilling with little exertion, however, the duties of his class, he lived in a world of his own, and devoted a large portion of his time, both by day and by night, to unrequired studies and unsuspected acquisitions. The purpose of his fourteenth year had ripened. Now he had made up his mind to be a missionary. "Once pledged to the undertaking," says one who was his fellow-student, and is about to become his biographer, "there was a degree of romance and chivalry, as well as of Christian zeal and magnanimity, in his proceedings. He calmly unrolled the map of the world, surveyed the entire field, and proceeded to select the portion he would cultivate." He fixed on Abyssinia, and he began searching the library for Amharic grammars and Bibles. During the second year of his studies he entertained the idea of proposing himself to the Baptist Missionary Society, and the letter is still extant which he wrote to Mr. Hall on this subject—a letter written in so sweet a spirit, and so truly characteristic of the man, that I am sorry the limits of this service will not permit me to read it entire. I confine myself to a single extract, which I select because it shows at once his unaffected piety, modesty, and self-knowledge. "When I consider also my natural talents," says he, "I think I may be of some use in this work. All men have some talents. I wish not to think of mine more highly than I ought to think, but to think soberly; and I desire to devote them all to him who has loved me, and bought me with his blood. The only thing I want to know is where I may be most useful. I think, if I have a talent for anything, it is for the learning of language; this I can study with unwearied diligence and delight; and I know that this is one of essential importance in the qualifications of a missionary." Impressed with the same convic-

tion, the Committee of the Society directed Mr. Yates's attention to India; he accepted that country as his field of toil, and sailed on the 28th of October, 1814.

Warmly was he welcomed at Serampore by the pioneer of biblical translators in the East, who seems to have seen in him, what he really was, a man eminently gifted to perfect his own gigantic undertakings.

During the short period of his residence at this station, he applied himself to the work of translation in immediate association with Dr. Carey; but, on his removal, as one of the then junior brethren, to Calcutta, in the beginning of the year 1817, and for some years afterwards, he devoted himself to more general missionary labour, pursuing at the same time, however, with his characteristic constancy, the acquisition of Oriental literature. In 1827, after twelve years of exhausting toil, and in a very reduced state of health, he revisited his native land by way of America, where his simplicity of character, purity of purpose, and solidity of learning, made a deep and just impression. In England, he preached one of the anniversary sermons at the annual meeting of the Society in 1828. It seems to have been on his return to India in the autumn of the same year, that he entered on the work of translating the Scriptures as the great business of his life. During the fourteen years which he was permitted to consecrate to this employment, he translated the whole of the Scriptures into the Bengali language, the whole of the New Testament into Urdu, the same into Hindi, the same into Sanscrit, and the half of the Old Testament into the same difficult tongue. With various interruptions from personal and domestic affliction, he pursued his indefatigable career till the commencement of the year 1845. As a last resource in regard to his own life, or rather, as an experiment affording but small hope of success, a second voyage to England was then undertaken. The fears entertained were but too speedily realized; and our beloved brother, cheered in his latest days by the kindly attentions of a Christian minister and missionary, the Rev. J. S. Wardlaw, of whom I take with pleasure this opportunity of making honourable mention, departed to his rest from the bosom of the deep. He died July the 3rd, 1845, in his fifty-third year. His last hours were eminently serene and tranquil; they were also pervaded by an unabated



attachment to his work. "My only regret," said he, "is that I am called so soon from the field." This language was in substance a renewed expression of the emotions of his fourteenth year, as his whole intermediate life had been a course of persevering toil identical with both.

Dr. Yates preserved the striking simplicity of his character throughout the whole of life. Even when a man of profound learning, he was as simple as a child. Both his capacity for acquiring language, and his industry in study, must have been vast. His known reading, and his various literary works, added to his efforts in biblical translation, have most surprised those who are the best able to judge of them. Those who most intimately knew him do not ascribe to him intellectual greatness; his leading characteristic was, in their judgment, a finely balanced mind. "Rarely has it happened," says Mr. Leslie, "that in any one man have all the powers of the mind been found in a state of such equal development, or, in other words, in a state of such meet proportion, as in him. In his mind, according to its stature (and this was not small), there seemed to be nothing defective and nothing redundant, but all appeared to be adjusted by the laws of the nicest harmony." His moral character seems to have been as complete, and as nicely adjusted, as his intellectual nature; and both conspired with his extensive learning to make him, what he is universally admitted to have been, a faithful and felicitous translator of the Word of God. For a considerable period of his life he stood at the head of the entire body of Oriental translators of the Scriptures. His object, generally speaking, was not to translate into new, or into many, languages, but to elaborate, and to advance towards perfection, what had already been on a magnificent scale begun. And he succeeded in his aim. His Bengali Bible is admitted on all hands to be an unrivalled production, and a model for translators. The rendering of the Old Testament into Sanscrit, the great work to which his latest energies were devoted, was one which no orientalist then living but himself was competent to undertake.

Mr. KNIBB was born at Kettering, in the year 1803. He was apprenticed in the city of Bristol to a printer, and seems during the term of his apprenticeship to have experienced the great transformation. He was a devoted Sunday school teacher. On one occasion he suggested the then hazardous



measure of preaching in Bristol fair, and he placed himself by the side of the minister who executed it. On receiving intelligence of the death of Mr. Thomas Knibb, who had gone to Jamaica as a schoolmaster in connexion with the church at Kingston about two years before, his resolution was promptly taken to fill up his brother's place; and, after spending some time at the Normal Institution of the British and Foreign School Society, he sailed for the West Indies in the month of November, 1824. He soon became a preacher as well as a schoolmaster; and being required by indications of declining health to quit Kingston, he took charge for a time of the station at Ridgeland, in connexion with Savanna-la-Mar. On the church at Falmouth being bereaved of a pastor by the death of Mr. Mann, Mr. Knibb was invited to become his successor. So deep a hold did his ardent and generous feelings take of the then enslaved and oppressed blacks, that, on the question of his settlement being put to the church, every member present held up both hands, and the whole then burst simultaneously into tears.

His course as a missionary was eminently successful. At the period of his settlement the church at Falmouth consisted of about seven hundred and fifty members; under his care it not only increased, but multiplied, so that, at the time of his death, it had given origin to five additional churches, none of them being more than twelve miles distant from the town, and a considerable number of his most valuable friends being sometimes drafted off in their formation. The number of members in the six churches is now about four thousand, and the conversions known to have been effected by his own ministry are said to amount to a similar number. His influence over his neighbouring brethren and their flocks was powerful, and it was always beneficially employed. He diffused over all the stations on the north side of the island the active spirit which characterized himself, and he was the originator of the association of these churches known by the name of the Baptist Western Union. With him, also, originated the generous sentiment, that the mission churches in Jamaica should, for the sake of extending the usefulness of the Society, relieve it from the burden of their pecuniary support; and many strenuous efforts did he make to encourage and assist those who felt painfully the temporary effects of their resolution to do so. Had his

course been only that of a missionary, William Knibb would have stood among the most devoted, the most generous, and the most successful, of his class; events occurred in Jamaica, however, which forced him into the arena of public life.

It had from the first been the policy of the Society, in common with all missionary societies which employed agents in the British slave-colonies, to take no part against slavery, but to do all that non-interference with that unrighteous and oppressive system could do to engage the favour of the planters. Little, indeed, of the coveted element was obtained by this course; but, with the help of this little, or rather, in the teeth of a virulent and all but universal opposition, the Gospel spread extensively and rapidly among the slaves, and Christianity was found—as when and where has it not been found?—incompatible with slavery. It did not, indeed, directly denounce the unrighteousness of the master, but it rendered his tyranny impracticable by raising the character of the slave. The planters resolved, accordingly, by some means or other, to expel the missionaries from the island.

An opportunity of attempting this soon offered. Just before Christmas, 1831, the slaves broke out in insurrection. Martial law was proclaimed, and the utmost licence of that lawless condition was taken to harass and insult the missionaries at large, and Mr. Knibb especially. A charge of conspiracy and criminal privity was, without a shadow of a foundation, and contrary, indeed, to conclusive evidence, got up against him; and upon this charge he was arrested, torn away from his home, and kept in custody part of two days, at the point of bayonets held by insolent militia men, who took no pains to conceal that they were thirsting for his blood. He was afterwards prosecuted on the same charge; but the Attorney-General of the island had not the hardihood to proceed on so baseless an indictment.

Foiled in their first attempt, the maddened planters did not abandon their design. Not so much deeming that the religion of the Established Church could safely be blended with slavery, as thinking that, under the cloak of zeal for the church, they might perpetrate with impunity every crime against the Dissenters, they formed the Colonial Church Union; the avowed intention of which was to destroy the chapels, and to banish the missionaries. Then began that series of lawless and malignant outrages, of which, some

twelve years ago, the world heard so much; and then was formed the sentiment and the resolution in the breasts of our missionaries, to which British colonial slavery owes its downfall. Our brethren came to an agreement with the planters on the great principle that slavery and Christianity could not exist together, and then they parted. The planters said, We will exterminate Christianity; the missionaries rejoined, We will abolish slavery.

Such was the origin of the memorable visit made to this country by brethren Knibb and Burchell, in the year 1832. I need not—cannot—here go into detail, or make more than a passing reference to the irrepressible boldness, and the undaunted courage, with which Knibb pursued his object—first in the Committee—then on the platform of the Society at its annual meeting—afterwards at meetings throughout the country, often face to face with the then unabashed defenders of slavery—and, finally, in protracted examinations before Committees of the two Houses of Parliament. Nor need I here enlarge on the result. I will say only, that it was humanity's purest and noblest triumph, won, as was fit, by the purest and the noblest means. Knibb's part in this achievement will place him in history by the side of Buxton, Wilberforce, and Clarkson.

Mr. Knibb was subsequently three times in England: at the Anti-Slavery Convention, in 1840; at the Jubilee of the Society, in 1842; and on behalf of his suffering brethren, in 1845. It is enough to say of these visits, that they were all undertaken for generous objects—for others, and not for himself.

His death strikes us as an event, not only sudden, but unexpected. No one had heard of his failing health. There is reason to believe, however, that his health had been failing, even antecedently to his last voyage to England. It is known to many that he was not well while he was here, nor was he so after his return. Close observers began to be fearful of him. He was carried off, however, by an attack of fever. Having baptized forty persons on the morning of Lord's day, the 9th of November, administered the Lord's supper in the evening, and walked home in the rain, he sickened on the following Tuesday, and on Saturday, the 15th, he died. His last words, addressed to her who was most deeply interested in hearing them, were—"It is all well."

The features of Mr. Knibb's character were obvious, and strongly marked. With a large stock of common sense and sound judgment, he combined a high sense of justice and ardent generosity. If you add to these a constitutional energy approaching to vehemence, undaunted courage, and an almost boundless capacity of exertion, and view the whole as under the influence of sanctifying grace, you have the man before you. He was emphatically the man of action, and possessed immense tact in the management of affairs. His indignation at the perpetration of wrong burned like a furnace, his kindliness towards all, and especially towards the afflicted, glowed like the sun. Difficulties roused, and dangers never appalled him. He was made for the time and the place in which he lived. No man's heart could have been better fitted to appreciate the horrors of slavery, and no man's arm more effectually braced for its destruction. The lacerated negro could not have had a more tender friend, nor the long dominant race of slaveholders a more terrific adversary. In the pulpit and the pastoral charge he was not less eminent than on the theatre of public affairs. "Never," says Mr. Tinson, "did he appear to more advantage than in the chamber of affliction." Nor was he less than usually lovely in the social circle, and in the family. His constitutional energy here manifested itself in the form of an inexhaustible vivacity, and his generosity in an aptitude to enter kindly into the feelings and interests of all. Terrific as he was when the lightning of indignation flashed from his eye, and the thunder of rebuke rolled from his lips, not a child need fear him; nor did any ever fear him but the perpetrators of oppression and wrong. And they, how could they love him? In his presence they felt their wickedness both detected and reproofed, and, as their only possible emotion towards him was hatred, so was it their highest commendation of him. Happily, however, enmity of this sort is transient; and now that he no longer lives to disturb them, even his enemies admit that he was a great and a good man. Not less, certainly, can be said in any quarter of one who, with no advantage from wealth or aristocratic connexion, without any aid from literary or scientific culture, and in defiance of many impediments, has, by his eminent exhibition both of the public and the private virtues, gained for himself a name in history, a rank among the distinguished men of his age, a



place in the small but honoured band of genuine and disinterested patriots.

Such were the men we have lost, viewed separately and apart. Before turning our eyes from them, let us for a moment place them side by side, and compare them one with another.

Our brethren were in many respects strikingly dissimilar. They were so in person. Knibb possessed a manly and athletic form, with an open and ruddy countenance: the frame of Yates was comparatively small and devoid of muscular strength, his face pale, and of a prevaillingly retiring expression. They were so in constitutional tendencies. Yates was for study, Knibb was for action: Yates was for treasuring up in his mind the lore of other times and other tongues, Knibb was for pouring out the native treasure of a generous heart upon suffering humanity. They were so in their position. Yates was placed in a region of calms, where, as, on the one hand, nothing arose to disturb his studious habits, so, on the other, the captivating stores of Oriental learning invited his assiduous application: Knibb stood in a region of storms, where human crime and wickedness had reached their climax, and the wild elements demanded some master-spirit to confront and control their rage. They were so in the issue of their labours. To Knibb it was permitted to dry up a deluge of iniquity and wrong, by which everything precious to man had long been overwhelmed in a common ruin, and to create a new heaven and a new earth, verdant and serene; to Yates it was given to open the fountains of those living waters, which, flowing over arid and barren sands, should render them fruitful as the garden of the Lord. They were so in their end. Knibb, after a life of uninterrupted health, was cut off abruptly, but in the bosom of his family, his brethren, and his flock; Yates, almost throughout life an invalid, and repeatedly on the border of the grave, died among strangers on the deep: a myriad voices poured out their heart-rending sobs over the grave of the one; over the watery bed of the other was heard nothing but the wailing of the tempest, or the gentler sighing of the breeze.

But, though dissimilar in many respects, our departed brethren were not contrasted in all. They were one in simplicity of character, in kindliness of heart, in child-like piety,



in profound devotedness. High energy and magnanimity characterized them both. If, borrowing an image from their respective localities, the one may be compared to the mighty river which effects its tranquil but steady movement through the vast plains of India, and the other to the impetuous torrent which sweeps like an avalanche from the mountain peaks of Jamaica, it may be said that they were both well adapted to the regions they were appointed to traverse, and that they have both flowed into an ocean in whose bosom their waters shall sweetly commingle for ever.

Such were the men we have lost.

I. And *great is our loss*. They were not men of ordinary mould. Constitutional qualities like theirs are not of every day occurrence; and the high moral qualities by which they were distinguished are of still greater rarity. These elements, however, are far from constituting the whole of our loss. Our brethren had been long in the field, one twenty, and the other thirty, years; and in this space of time they had made acquirements, and attained a position, of inestimable practical value. How admirably did Dr. Yates's stores of classical and Oriental learning, and his well-disciplined habits of mind, qualify him to pursue the work of biblical translation! What extensive good might have been hereafter achieved by Mr. Knibb, in the influential and commanding position he had gained! Fitness which it had taken a quarter of a century to acquire is extinguished in a moment! The stern hand of death has laid these invaluable brethren low, even in the dust! The place that once knew them shall know them no more. No more shall the successive pages of the Sacred Oracles be prepared by the hand, or corrected by the eye, so well qualified to render them instructive to the people of the East. No more shall the hills of Jamaica respond to the voice, or its people kindle with the ardour, of the man most loved and feared within its borders. The fire of his zeal is quenched in death, and the thunder of his words is hushed in the grave. Alas, indeed, for the widows and the fatherless, whom the stroke has bitterly bereaved! But a far wider circle bewails the fallen. Alas! for the churches, and the missionary brethren, to whom Knibb was so invaluable a counsellor and friend! Alas! for the nations, for whom Yates was above all men fitted to kindle the light of life! Alas! for ourselves, to whom these men were, as far as men

might be, a staff in either hemisphere for our hopes to rest upon! Yes! it is a day for sadness and lamentation. Come, ye bereaved families, ye fatherless and widows, who have lost a treasure without a name! Come, ye sorrowing flock, who have lost a pastor, and ye numerous ministers and churches, who have lost a brother and a friend! Come, ye myriads of the enfranchised children of Africa, who have lost your noblest and your bravest champion! Come, ye nations of the East, who see the cistern broken from which ye were beginning to drink of the water of life! Come, join with us in tears! How are the mighty fallen! And at a period of life how early—Yates at fifty-three, Knibb at forty-two! The one, it might have been hoped, not much past his prime, and the other in his very meridian! Who shall take up their labours? Who *can* take them up? Can it be less than the labour of another thirty years that can reproduce the skill and wisdom of Yates? Can any man ascend again the altitude from which Knibb has fallen?

II. If, however, our loss has been great, *great, also, is our reason for thankfulness.* The measure of the loss we have suffered, is the measure, also, of the mercy we have received. To say that we have lost invaluable men, is at the same time to acknowledge that we have possessed them. We *have* possessed them, the one for twenty, the other for thirty, years. And must we not be thankful? Whence did they spring? Who gave them to us? Their noble constitutional attributes, whence came they? And their high moral qualities, their deep humility, their unfeigned piety, their unblemished purity, their undying zeal, whence came these? Who kept them holy, while some fell by temptation? Who kept them awake, while some fell into slumber? O! we acknowledge in them *the grace of God!* They possessed nothing which they had not received. And we know from whence they received it. There is but one Giver of every good and perfect gift, and to him be all the praise! We are not, we trust, glorying in men. We desire it should be as it is written, "He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. i. 31). What we say is, that, having received such gifts, we have eminent reason to be thankful. We might have had men either of small powers, or of slumbering zeal, or of unstable piety. We might have had men whose death would have been a relief to us. Let us thank God for having conferred

on us men whose loss penetrates our hearts with unutterable sadness.

III. While, on the one hand, we are thankful, we must, on the other, *be submissive*. Having such men as these, doubtless we would fain have kept them. And we may, perhaps, be disposed to repine at their loss. But we must correct such a tendency. Although we possessed them, they were not ours. They were God's, given to us for a time, or lent rather than given. If he has taken away, he has only used his right. He takes but what he gave. Sovereignty is his prerogative, and submission our duty. And submission, let me add, not in a grudging, but in a kindly spirit; not as of necessity, but willingly. The Disposer of events is wise and kind, as well as sovereign, and knows when to take away, as well as when to bestow. Were we querulous in this matter, he might well couch his rebuke in a question which has come down to us from ancient times—"Should it be according to thy mind?" We know it should not, and we must withdraw all pretensions to dictation. All things ought to be according to his will; and we have only, in profound humility, to say, "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good." We suppress, therefore, the murmuring thoughts which may have been too prompt to rise, and, in our sadness, say, Eternal Father, thy will be done!

IV. As we have no cause for repining, so *neither have we any cause for despondency*. It is true, the brethren whose loss we deplore were eminently adapted to their work, and were pursuing a course of extensive usefulness. It is true, also, that their removal will sensibly diminish the amount of present effort, and throw at least a temporary feebleness into some important departments of exertion. The moment is a serious, and even an anxious, one, well fitted to bring us to our knees, and to keep us in an attitude of waiting upon God. It is a time for us to realize afresh our love to one another, and to bind ourselves anew to the cause of him who smites us. He hath not smitten us in anger, nor is he about to forsake us. He has shown us too many tokens for good to allow us now to mistrust him. He has taken valuable agents from us. But what then? The cause of God is not dependent on such fluctuations. These are but the ripples on the surface of a stream, the current of which proceeds undisturbed in its course. Missionary labours were going on

successfully before Knibb and Yates were born, and will continue to do so now they are in their graves. They were well-adapted and useful instruments, it is true. But whence did they arise? They sprang out of the common mass of mankind. No distinction attached to their birth or parentage. No signal peculiarity distinguished their boyhood. One was bred a shoemaker, the other was apprenticed to a printer. Why, other such men may be, and doubtless are (if the familiarity of the expression may be excused), among the shoemakers and apprentice-boys of the present generation. The net that presents to us the most splendid tenants of the sea is cast but into the common deep. It is from among *mankind*, in the most comprehensive sense of that term, that God has taken the choicest instruments of his will; and, when any of these are done with, mankind remains to him, presenting in every generation an inexhaustible store of similar elements. To him there shall never be wanting a man to accomplish his purposes. His dealings, indeed, indicate that, in this respect, he is wealthy, and conscious of his wealth. When an instrument of peculiar fitness presents itself to us, we take jealous care of it, and sigh for its immortality. Not so with God. He often blends the most admirable qualifications with the greatest frailty, as though from the first these most beautiful specimens of his workmanship were destined to early destruction. And in other instances he permits those who appeared to be raised up for a special work, to fall speedy victims to dangers which others survive. It is not that he despises fit instruments; it is that he has plenty of them. He can dash the most exquisite of them in pieces, and yet he will have enough to effectuate his designs.

Or he can even work without instruments, that is to say, without instruments of the class we admire. He can do more work by fewer and by feebler instruments. The success of labourers in the cause of God bears no fixed proportion to their qualifications. It is allotted in the sovereignty of divine goodness and wisdom. A larger measure of God's blessing may make any labourer more successful than he is, and a labourer of few qualifications more useful than one of many. He holds in his hands a right thus to pour contempt on the pride of man, and to vindicate his own honour. And in this respect we should be ready to yield to him the honour which is his due. His cause is to be promoted by



whatever instruments he may be pleased to appoint. To its prosperity he is pledged, and he will be faithful to his word; but he is not pledged as to the means by which it shall be advanced. Goliath fell by a sling; Jericho was taken by rams' horns; and the Midianites were vanquished by broken pitchers. Let the Lord work in his own way, and let no man's heart fail him if he should not array us to our mind with sword, and with spear, and with shield.

V. If, however, the bereavements we now suffer create no occasion for despondency, are they not *pregnant with instruction*? Have they not a meaning? And should we not anxiously endeavour to understand and interpret them rightly?

There is undoubted wisdom and importance in these inquiries, and it is my desire to do them justice. Yet I am not disposed to indulge myself in an incautious answer to them. The interpretation of providential events is a critical and hazardous task. It is one in which we are very liable to err through our ignorance, to be biassed by our feelings, or to be misled by our imagination. And in the present case there is, I think, peculiar need of caution. We have lost within a short time two invaluable men, the chiefs in either hemisphere. Some, perhaps, might be disposed to say, this is a proof that we have idolized them, and God has thus rebuked our idolatry. But I am not ready to concur in such a sentiment. We *may* have idolized our departed brethren; and, if we have done so—let every man's conscience be the judge—their death is undoubtedly adapted to detect and chastise the sin. But there is nothing in their death, I conceive, to prove that we have idolized them. I should not have felt myself constrained to admit this, even if they had died at an age unquestionably premature. But what is the case now? One brother has worn thirty years in Bengal, and another twenty years in Jamaica. Spending life amidst toils like theirs, they must be held to have reached the full age of man. They could scarcely have lived much longer without a deviation from the ordinary laws of human existence, that is to say, without a miracle. I see nothing, therefore, in these events, that gives them the character of a chastisement, or a rebuke. Whether their brethren idolize them or not, God's servants must die, and, unless they be exceptions to the general course of humanity, some of them must die young.



Nor do I think that, in point of fact, the brethren whose loss we deplore have been, generally speaking, objects of our idolatry. That they have been regarded with a sincere and cordial esteem is, I suppose, true—and so much was just; but our esteem of them has not been loquacious, nor, I hope, vain-glorious. That it was not excessive may be inferred with some probability from this, that the estimate formed of our brethren after their death is likely to be higher than that formed of them during their life, and that the strongest terms of eulogy are already employed, not by ourselves, but by others. I trust that, in this respect, God has not been displeased with us. My feeling is that we have rather erred in a defective estimate of his gifts.

Do I then say that we are to learn nothing from these bereavements? By no means.

The death of our beloved fellow-labourers inculcates powerfully the general lesson, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Isa. ii. 22.) The proneness of the human heart is undoubtedly to the evil here indicated. In the missionary work, for example, *the men* are the parties before our eyes, the actual workmen; and the work comes, by a natural and unperceived association, to be in our minds identified with the doers of it. In the case of Dr. Yates, his health, so long feeble and so often interrupted, taught all his friends to hold him loosely; while the robust and hitherto unshaken health of Mr. Knibb, amidst scorching suns and unwearied labours, may have led us to calculate on a long continuance of his usefulness. Let us then learn the lesson that the breath of man, even of the strongest man, is in his nostrils, and that no account is to be taken of him as a source of permanent help. On one Sabbath he may be proclaiming with ardour the glorious Gospel to listening crowds; on the next, amidst the unrestrained wailings of crowds ten times more numerous, he may be laid in the grave. Trust not in man. Trust in the Lord. He is the everliving God, and in him is everlasting strength. O! how profound and inestimable a consolation it is, that the cause of Christ does *not* depend upon man! He who laid the foundation of it in his death liveth for evermore, to secure its interests, and to conduct it to its triumphs. He is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. The vicissitudes of mortal life affect

him not. Ah! were HE to die! But it is impossible. Death hath no more dominion over him. And in his life all is secure. For he must reign, until he hath put all enemies under his feet; and the pleasure of the Lord must prosper in his hands. Come hither, therefore, from the open grave where you weep so bitterly. Come hither, from the vacant pulpit, and the empty habitation, that you look on so wistfully. Look upwards, and heavenwards. There Jesus dwells, the refuge and strength of his people in every generation. A fulness of power and grace is his, unexhausted and inexhaustible. Lean no more upon an arm of flesh, nor let the reeds, as they break, pierce your hands again. Turn away even from the youthful form and the sparkling eye, which give a promise you are so ready to believe of protracted life. "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?"

Besides this general lesson, the bereavements we now lament inculcate one, perhaps, of a more limited and specific kind. They lead us, at all events, to a very touching view of the missionary work. For they are far from standing alone. They are not so much deaths of individuals as deaths of a class, and of a class, unhappily, very large. How affecting, for example, is the following statement, given by Mr. Wenger, in communicating the intelligence of another recent loss, in the person of Mrs. Evans!\* "On the 4th of October, 1839," says this estimable brother, "just six years ago, and a few days after my arrival, I was present at a meeting of ten Baptist missionaries; viz., Yates, W. H. Pearce, Thomas, Ellis, Bayne, G. Parsons, Tucker, Phillips, Morgan, and myself; and Mrs. W. Pearce (now Mrs. Yates), Mrs. G. Pearce, Mrs. Penney, the first Mrs. Thomas, Mrs. Ellis, Mrs. Bayne, Mrs. Parsons, Mrs. Tucker, Mrs. Phillips, and Mrs. Morgan, were then in Calcutta. Since then there have died Dr. Yates, Mr. W. H. Pearce, Mrs. Thomas, Mr. and Mrs. Ellis, Mrs. Bayne, Mr. and Mrs. Parsons; and,

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\* On the very day on which this discourse was delivered, intelligence arrived of another afflictive bereavement which has befallen the Society, in the removal of Mrs. Pearson, who has been for several years labouring in the educational department in the Bahamas. She died in the mission-house at Nassau, of yellow fever, on the 13th of November, 1845, two days only before Mr. Knibb fell a victim to the same complaint in Jamaica. Both Mrs. Pearson and Mrs. Evans were invaluable missionaries, and are deeply and extensively lamented.

out of the twenty persons here enumerated, only eight are in India now." And that this is no new thing may be gathered from the following extract of a letter from one who has been engaged for a much longer period. "I have been in the field," says Mr. Thomas, "almost twenty years; and, oh! what scenes have I witnessed! I and George Pearce came out together, and joined the junior brethren, the honoured Yates, Pearce, and Penney. Now where are they, and their much-loved partners? The first Mrs. Penney has long since slept in the tomb; and there too I saw her excellent husband, and the lovely Pearce, laid. Over the first Mrs. Yates the waves of the ocean roll, and buried deep in the waters of the Red Sea lie the mortal remains of her beloved partner. One alone of the six endeared friends who greeted our arrival remains, and she is clothed in the weeds of second widowhood. And of those who have since joined our band not a few have passed off the stage. Anderson soon disappeared. Ellis and his esteemed helpmate have entered into rest. George Parsons died in the country. Gibson was called away within a few months of his arrival; while Bayne and Tucker were constrained to return to their native land. As to myself, I have buried two wives, who were of the excellent of the earth, and four children; so that, both in my domestic relations, and in my connexions as a missionary, I have had repeatedly to drink of the cup of affliction."

I make no apology, my brethren, for quoting these details, and I am sure you will require none. They exhibit the names of men, and of women too, who deserve to be held by us in everlasting remembrance, and whom it is at once a duty and a gratification thus far to associate in this service with the honoured dead to whom it more directly relates. They are, moreover, necessary, in order to present to us the whole of the case on which our attention is to be fixed. It is not merely that our brethren Knibb and Yates are dead; it is that many others are dead also. And the general fact is, that the missionary work involves a large sacrifice of human life. It is too certainly a shortening of the days, and the path to an early grave. The commission is to labour, but the destiny is to sicken and to die. Nor is it a sacrifice of mere life that is thus involved in the missionary work; it is a sacrifice of the best and most valuable lives. Those who are sent on this errand are not ordinary men,

whose place may be filled up by drafts at pleasure from the common herd. They are men of God. Nor are they men of common piety and endowments. They are, in some sense, the best of us. They are the *élite* of our churches, the anointed ones for the post of most arduous duty, the brave forlorn hope of the host of God. In the contemplation of them we involuntarily exclaim, O would that *they* could be immortal! Or that, at least, their term of labour might not be prematurely closed! But, alas! they die! How rapidly they are cut down! How often, how insatiably, the grave opens its mouth for them!

I hope the tenor of these remarks will not be misunderstood. They are not made in a spirit of repining. I am not making preparation to call in question the propriety of the missionary enterprise, or to justify the sounding of a retreat, even from its most perilous spheres. The battle is the Lord's. It is ours to move onwards at his call, and his to watch over the safety of his armed ones. They will be immortal till their work is done. The lives so freely devoted to his service are doubtless an offering of a sweet savour unto God, and the costly sacrifice will be amply compensated at the resurrection of the just. The view which I have taken, however, has two bearings.

In the first place, the mortality incident to missionary labour ought greatly to endear to us those who embark in it. Whether at the outset they realize it or not, they go into thick dangers, and inevitable sorrows. Our own lot contains griefs enough, but there are more in theirs. Let us never fail to sympathize with them, to pray for them, to honour them. In their sorrows they lean upon our kind remembrance. "O! my brother," says Mr. Thomas, in a letter already quoted, "these are strokes upon strokes. Pray for us, that our faith fail not." Which of us will not respond to so touching an appeal? And let us regard with similar sentiments those also, who, in parting with those they love for this work of the Lord, suffer scarcely less—perhaps more—than they. Ah! my brethren! Talk we of contribution? Here are the great contributors to missions: these noble-minded parents, who, with profoundly-stirred affections, contribute to it their sons and their daughters, and, in their persons, an amount of love, and toil, and domestic wealth, incalculable; and those consecrated youths, who, with fond



hopes that would bud, indeed, under every discouragement—and it was well they did—went where they were too certainly destined only to be blighted, and to perish. The treasures respectively poured forth admit of no comparison. We give money; they give heart, soul, life, kindred—all, that money never could have bought, and never can repay.

Secondly, the mortality incident to missionary labour must inspire an earnest wish for the growth of an effective native agency. It is European life that falls. The unaccustomed climate is the fatal element. The *native* preacher attains the full length of his days. O! could we see churches once planted sustained by the ministry and care of native converts, how much might the constant demand for European missionaries be lessened, and the afflictive costliness of our efforts, as now conducted, be reduced!

I am well aware that, in expressing this desire, I am simply uttering from this place a sentiment which has been often breathed elsewhere, and one which has been cherished by none more warmly than by our missionaries themselves. I know that strenuous efforts have for years past been made in both hemispheres to prepare native converts for ministerial employment; and I certainly can give no sanction to an idea, if such an idea be entertained in any quarter, that the missionaries in either hemisphere have intentionally done less in this department than they might have done. I believe them when they say that they have done, and that they are doing, their best. And I take the result to be as they state it, that native converts may be usefully employed under European superintendence, but that they cannot satisfactorily be left to work alone. It is this statement on which I pause. This perpetual requirement of European superintendence at every station—I say perpetual, because at present no prospect of its termination is indicated—is a grave element in the missionary question. It attaches a clog to the whole system. Could our messengers, when they had planted churches in a country, confide the local interests of Christianity to their care, they might proceed to contiguous lands, and preach the Gospel in the regions beyond them. In this way, in a comparatively short period all the nations might hear, and the world, with the seed of the kingdom thus sown broadcast in it, might be prepared for that heavenly rain which shall render the whole fruitful and



verdant, as the paradise of God. But, as the case stands now, the world cannot be reached. Missionaries plant churches, and live and die the pastors of them. And not only so, the next pastor, and successive pastors without a prospect of limitation, must come from England. A missionary society becomes thus no longer an aggressive, but a stationary, body. Its whole resources are spent upon the field it occupies, and, unless by some convulsive effort, it can do nothing with the desert beyond. It may be true that the resources of missionary societies may, and should, be much larger than they are; but no one will maintain, I imagine, that, by any conceivable augmentation of them, THE WORLD can be covered with the knowledge of the Lord on the present system.

And, as the constant demand for European superintendence attaches a clog to the modern missionary system, so the same feature places it in contrast with the missionary system of ancient times. The work and object of a missionary are as nearly apostolical as anything now in existence. But the apostles planted churches and left them, after, at the longest, a few years, contenting themselves subsequently with an occasional visit, a letter, or the mission of a fellow-labourer to set in order that which was wanting. How little could Paul have done, if he had been always wanted at Philippi! How little, indeed, the whole band of disciples, if every Gentile church had required a succession of pastors from Jerusalem!

I am ready to admit that the apostles were inspired men, and that the age to which I am referring was that of supernatural gifts; but I do not think that either of these circumstances touches the question. It was by the power of the Gospel, not by the authority of an inspired man, that sinners were converted; and the absence of supernatural endowments may be deemed amply compensated for by the possession of the sacred Scriptures. Nor can I take into consideration any differences, real or imaginary, either between the condition of the pagans of the Roman world at the commencement of the Christian era, and that of the pagans of the world in any part of it now; or between the character and adaptation of those who might respectively be called to sustain the pastoral office at either period. The necessity and sufficiency in both cases of the influence of

the Spirit of God, annihilates all differences. Without the Holy Spirit, what was effected could not have been done then ; with it, the same things may be done now. And the same things must be done now, if the Gospel is to make any perceptible approach to that rapidity of movement which is indispensable, at some period or other, to its predicted triumphs.

If I am asked whither these observations are bearing me, I answer that they land me in one of two conclusions. Either more might safely and advantageously be done than is done by missionaries, in placing native converts in spheres of independent action ; or God is not pleased to give, at the present time, such a kind and measure of success to his Gospel among the heathen as affords a near prospect of its universal prevalence. In which of these conclusions to rest, at present I know not ; but I see no refuge from one or the other of them. In either aspect the subject is of the deepest importance, and I commend it to the most serious and prayerful consideration of my brethren.

VI. Whatever light these thoughts may shed on our missionary undertakings, *the immediate wants of the field must be supplied*. These, at the present moment, on the continent of India more especially, are of extreme urgency. From that quarter the cries for help are loud, incessant, and distressing. In that region invaluable labourers have fallen in rapid succession. *Their* work is done, and we may not—we would not—recall them from their reward. But the work is not done for which they lived. On the contrary, "there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed." Who will devote himself to the conquest of it ? In earthly warfare, so soon as the front rank is broken one from the rear immediately fills up the gap. Is there less courage in the heavenly war ? The thinned and sorrowing legions of the Lord cry out plaintively, Send us reinforcements ! Will no one go to their aid ? "I fear," says one of them, "it is this mortality that keeps many good men and women from offering themselves." Tell me, disciples of Jesus, is this fear just ? And he who, having laid down his life for us, and having, in all ages hitherto, had followers who were willing to lay down their lives for him, is he now for the first time to find his standard deserted ? You would live long ? Then be a missionary ! Knibb lived longer in twenty years than other

men live in a hundred. You would live happily? Then be a missionary! After all his toils, the dying Yates exclaimed, "If I had a thousand lives, I would willingly sacrifice them all for him who loved me."

Come! but act under no momentary and evanescent excitement. Bring to the work no unhallowed fire. Kindle your devotedness at the altar of God. Come in the spirit of a sacrifice, that nothing may take you by surprise. Bring us no unsanctified passions, no habits of self-indulgence, of self-seeking, of self-will. Be such as the work demands, and then devote yourselves to it. Become our messengers to the nations. And, when, at your Master's bidding, you shall have entered into rest, our children shall embalm your names, as we do those of the loved departed to-day.

In conclusion, it is an affecting consideration to me that, in discharging the solemn duty of this evening, I stand where about six months ago I stood, in delivering to Mr. Knibb a valedictory address, and where he himself stood, in uttering what may be regarded as his last words to an English auditory. He concluded that address by recommending to all, and especially to the young, the service of the Saviour. It is the very thing he would have wished to do, dear friends, had he known he should address you no more. It is the very thing he would wish to do, if he might now speak to you from heaven. And what a new argument could he now employ! Then he spoke of the sweetness of the cross; now he could speak of the glory of the crown. Ah! my friends, did those melting accents, the tones of which seem still to rest upon the ear, win you to the Saviour? If not, O listen to the more touching eloquence of his death! There shone the simple-hearted Christian. "A guilty, weak, and helpless worm," said he, "on Jesus' arms I fall." It is your infinite mercy that in this respect you may imitate him, and it is indispensable to your happiness that you should do so. Be entreated. With him embrace the Saviour; with him devote yourselves to his service; that with him you may hereafter rest, among the spirits of just men made perfect, in the presence of the Lord.

## GOD'S CARE OF HIS SAINTS IN DEATH.\*

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"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."—*Psalms* cxvi. 15.

IF the death of others affects us as it ought, my brethren, it makes us mindful of our own. For death is an event which must happen to us all. "It is appointed unto men once to die." And, as we see others sicken and die around us, it should make us call this ordination of divine Providence to remembrance, and lead us to realize the truth that, some day or other, and perhaps before long, some malady, more or less similar, will bring us also to the grave. WE—the young, the healthy, the busy, the forgetful—WE are to lie upon the sick and dying bed. The pallid countenance, the languor, the debility, the pain, and the various elements which constitute the dying strife, all these, in some form or another, are for you, dear brethren, and for me.

These are things, indeed, of which we are apt to think little and seldom, but of which we should not be quite forgetful, so often as we see them actually occurring around us. The events we witness of this class, if they were to make us mindful of our latter end, would but help us to secure a great and solemn interest. Even if those who have to die *could* live as though no such prospect were before them, that would be but a sort of madness. Death is an event too solemn, and too deeply implicating our interests for time and for eternity, to be wisely put out of remembrance. We cannot live well if we forget we are to die.

I know, indeed, that a frequent remembrance of death has a tendency to disturb our tranquillity. It is adapted to produce in the mind uneasy thoughts, and to set on foot anxious inquiries. But, my brethren, we who have an

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\* Preached at Abingdon, December 6th, 1846, on occasion of the death of Mr. Benjamin Williams.

interest in Christ and his salvation, know assuredly how to set all these anxieties at rest. We ought to transfer unsettled and uneasy sensations of this sort to the worldly and the careless. They, indeed, cannot think of death without dread; but surely *we* may. All the great questions connected with death are well determined for us by faith in a living Saviour; and as for that which may yet create anxiety to the Christian, the sentiment which the text presents to us is well adapted to relieve us from its disturbing power. "Precious," says the Psalmist, "in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." We look, perhaps, into the dim and impenetrable future, fain timidly to inquire when, and where, and how, we shall die; by what malady, amidst what circumstances, with how much suffering, and, above all, with how much hope: and because we can answer none of these questions we are anxious, and it may be more than anxious—disconsolate. Yet let us recollect ourselves. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." What is concealed from us is known to him; what is uncertain to us is regulated by him; what is so deeply interesting to us is cared for by him. Nothing shall be forgotten that either our safety or our comfort requires.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." The sentiment is a general one. It is of this tenor—that the care which God exercises over the whole progress of his people he exercises also over their dying hour. The Psalmist does not here separate the period of death from the rest of a Christian's course. He does not say—"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death," and only the death, "of his saints." Their life also is precious to him in all its parts, and he is ever ready with his help in all their hours of trial and grief. The idea is, that the care which God bestows upon his people in all their other circumstances spreads itself also over the dying hour. Not less precious in his sight is their death than is their life. The sentiment thus taken is highly consolatory. We are comforted in knowing—we rejoice to know—that he who careth for the sparrows, and feedeth the hungry lions, careth for us also, and far more tenderly than for them. Our waking and our sleeping hours, our seasons of sorrow and of joy, our times of sickness and of health, are all under his wise and gracious arrangement. Now we extend, and we are warranted to



extend, this idea to the period of our dissolution. He who careth for us in life, careth for us in death also. That cannot be a time excepted from his uniform love. He who by his presence cheers and animates us while we live, will by the same blessed presence cheer us when we die. And this might be enough for us. The grace we live upon, can we not likewise die upon it? Has not our experience supplied us with proofs enough of the all-sufficiency of our heavenly friend, to engage our confidence in him when we walk through the dark valley that is before us?

The idea, however, may be carried yet further. I think I am warranted in saying, not only that the same divine care and love which are exercised over us in life will be exercised over us in death, but that a peculiar and pre-eminent care, something beyond all that we have experienced in life, will be vouchsafed to us in the dying hour. It is characteristic of God to proportion his mercies to our need, and to come most quickly at the loudest call. Now there is in the dying hour something adapted peculiarly to call for his presence and help.

In the first place, *Death is a season of more especial sorrow and suffering.*

Allowance being made for cases of sudden death, which seems to annihilate all pains of the class of which I am speaking, as it ordinarily approaches us death is preceded by disease. This is always more or less, and sometimes very largely, productive of pain, a full proportion of which attends the dying hour. But no sicknesses involve so much suffering as those which bring us down to the grave. Even if there be a small amount, or the total absence, of bodily pain, the feeling of being sick unto death is peculiarly and profoundly sorrowful. Sickness with hope of recovery is not to be compared with the exhaustion of expiring nature, the last sinking of the heart, and the dying moan. These are things which stand pre-eminent among human sorrows. But "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." He who has been by our bedside in other sicknesses, will he be absent then? He who has comforted us in other sufferings, will he disappoint us when heart and flesh are failing? Is it not *then* that he will place underneath us most promptly the everlasting arm?

But I refer not merely to bodily suffering. There is in

the season of death a large amount of mental agony. The heart is then pierced to its centre. It is the time of separation from friends whom we have dearly loved. It effects the dissolution of filial, parental, and conjugal ties, and rends, without sparing one, the heart's tenderest strings. Upon other occasions we may have been called to part with a single friend, or beloved member of the family; but in death we have to part with all together, and to be stripped at once of all the relations which have been most interesting to us here. The name of husband, wife, child, are unknown beyond the grave. Death involves a separation, also, from all the scenes and objects with which we have been familiar, even from those in which we have been most deeply interested. No more activity, no more society, no more pleasure. The sources of earthly gratification are then no longer available for us. The sick heart turns away from all in incurable sadness. And in this time of trial and suffering without a parallel will the God of all comfort be wanting to our aid? Never was there a tear which he did not wipe away, never was there a grief which he did not alleviate; and, assuredly, he will be present with proportionate tenderness amidst the unprecedented sufferings of the dying hour. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

Secondly, *The season of death pre-eminently involves our interests.*

Our secular interests are deeply involved in it. Our days may have been marked, perhaps, by industrious toil for the support of ourselves and of those dependent upon us, or, perhaps, by domestic cares and anxieties; but, whatsoever may have been effected by us in life, in death all is at an end. The tenderest mother can care for her children no more; she has to resign her gravest duties into the hands of others, whom, perhaps, she knows not. The industrious man can toil no more, and those who for their daily need may have long looked up to him must now be dependent on strangers. All the anxieties of life gather round about the deathbed; and there is, perhaps, more to be done, arranged, and disposed of in the parting hour, than there has been at any other moment.

Death is a period of still deeper importance to us in relation to our eternal interests. At that hour, all the great questions of a spiritual kind, which may have been more or less

undecided during life, are brought to a crisis, and determined for ever. Then the character receives its final stamp of sincerity and truth—then the conflict which has long been waged comes to its conclusive issue, and the triumph is won—then the fears are disappointed, the hopes are realized, and the long struggle which they have maintained in the heart is terminated. It is the time of entrance into the unseen and eternal world. Then the Christian goes into the dark valley, to encounter all its terrors. Then he steps from earth to heaven. Then he passes into regions of glory hitherto unseen, and mingles with blessed associates whose majesty has not been conceived. Then he enters on a state of expanded existence altogether untried, and realizes sublime joys of which but dim intimations have been given. And shall not God be with him then? Will he be absent at the very crisis of immortal destiny? Shall there be no heavenly companion in that dark valley where there can be no earthly one? Will not God guide the ascending spirit heavenward, and speak courage to the heart amidst new and unimagined glories? “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.” He that would not let them take a step unaided through all their pilgrimage, shall he not cheer by his countenance their arrival at their everlasting home?

Thirdly, *The season of death requires a peculiarly vigorous exercise of Christian character.*

The graces of the Christian are of no trifling energy, as exercised amidst the various trials and duties of life; but they require to be exercised with far greater strength when we come to die. It is thus with faith. It is a great thing to commit the soul into the hands of Jesus Christ with such views of eternity as we get while living; but it is a still more solemn thing to commit our souls to Christ with the thoughts which occupy a dying hour. When the eternal world is near, and all its awful realities are presented to us with vividness—then to cast ourselves on Jesus Christ with firmness, simplicity, and joy, and to feel that, having done it, we can venture with full hope into the eternal world, this is faith indeed.

It is thus with resignation. Now we resign our treasures singly, but there is not one earthly treasure which must not then be parted with. The heart's firmest and tenderest grasp of *all* we have loved so well must be relaxed, and we must

pass from the world destitute, and without a portion, save as we can call the Lord himself our friend. Oh! what submission to God, what absorption in his will, must be exercised by a Christian then!

It is thus with hope. The eye of hope is already fixed on the things which are above, and transmits to the inner man beams of glory not unfelt by the kindling heart; but how much of its more animating influence will be required in death! What firmness, brightness, rapture, to make approaching heaven supply the place of retiring earth, and to prepare the departing spirit, not merely for a willing, but a joyous flight!

It is thus with love. We love, even now, an unseen Saviour, but we are easily reconciled to a protracted absence from him. What should love become when we are about to be introduced into his presence, and when we should be found desiring to depart, because it is far better! What but transporting love can extinguish all reluctance, and supply the wings on which our souls shall ascend to the abodes of bliss?

Ah! my dear brethren, these are exercises of the Christian character to which we have never yet been called. No circumstances in life demand them at our hands; but death will demand them, if we are to quit this world either happily to ourselves, or honourably to God. And hence there is great grace wanted for the dying hour. But will not God help us to die? He who has said, "As thy days so shall thy strength be" (Deut. xxxiii. 25), and who knows what the dying hour demands, will he not give the necessary strength? He will, for it is written, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

Fourthly, *The season of death, while it will require much of us, will require it under circumstances of peculiar weakness.*

Then the body is weak, and with the body the mind. Hence the aggravated folly of persons who put off religion to the dying hour. The condition of the body depresses and enfeebles the mind, so that, although they would have had physical strength enough, if they had been pious, to exercise piety, they have not strength sufficient to exercise repentance. Then they say truly they cannot think, their strength of mind being gone with the strength of the body. The Chris-

tian, also, when the languor and drowsiness connected with disease, and attending the dissolution of nature, affect the soul, feels that he can think but little, and act but feebly. In these circumstances of great weakness, however, he has to act a most important part. Although he is dying, he needs his graces in peculiar vigour, and thus the largest demand is made upon him in his greatest feebleness. But he that "knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are dust," shall he not be then our refuge and our strength? Shall he not in dying weakness make the omnipotence of his grace the more illustrious? "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

Lastly, *In death we are especially liable to spiritual conflicts.*

There is an adversary who is watching always for opportunities to do us injury. He takes delight through the whole period of our life to assail us, and would, if he could, disappoint our spiritual hopes. No doubt, he closely watches the deathbed. How many instances have been known of evil thoughts and temptations suggested to the dying Christian, showing that the tempter does not fail to take advantage of what he may think a favourable opportunity of effecting his design! He knows that, if we pass that hour in safety, all is safe, and that, if we get beyond the boundary that divides time from eternity, there is no more scope for him; he watches the deathbed, therefore, as the last chance of attaining his object. And so the Christian has to die, not in circumstances of unwonted tranquillity, but of unwonted peril. He has to die in the presence of a cruel enemy, concentrating all his art and energy for a last assault. But he that has conquered for us, and has hitherto made us conquerors, will be present in that last conflict too, and will not abandon us to the malice of the adversary. It is, in truth, at this very time of critical strife that Satan shall be bruised under our feet. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

See now, my brethren, the conclusion at which we arrive. The season of death makes a louder call than usual on God's interposition, inasmuch as it more peculiarly needs it; I argue, therefore, that you may depend upon it with the greater certainty. If it were possible that we should *ever* be forgotten, it should be somewhere in life, but surely not in



death. No, not in death—where the floods of sorrow are deepest, and the assault of the adversary may be sharpest; where duties are the most arduous, and strength the most exhausted; at once the valley of darkness, and the valley of decision in relation to our everlasting welfare. No, *not in death*. “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the DEATH of his saints.”

Dear brethren, these thoughts are highly consolatory; but, to realize the consolation they bring, two things are necessary.

1. When we say that the care which God uniformly takes of us in life will be extended to the dying hour, our comfort from this thought lies in our consciousness of his present care. Unless we realize the lovingkindness of God in life, we know not what to expect when we die. In order to look cheerfully on death, therefore, it is necessary so to live as abiding under the shadow of our Father's wings. To experience the tender mercy of God in life, is the necessary ground and basis of a reasonable anticipation that we shall experience it in death. Nothing beyond the realization we can give to God's present care can be transferred to our dying hour.

2. When we say that the graces of the Spirit will be strengthened for the extraordinary exercise of them required in a dying hour, this implies their previous existence and exercise. For that solemn occasion they are not to be created, but only invigorated. The feeblest Christian shall then be made strong, as strong as his case demands; but he who does not consciously exercise in life the graces of the Christian, how can he expect to be strengthened for the more vigorous exercise of them in death? If we wish to look forward to the day of death with consolation, we must live as Christians. We may expect our graces to be strong for that period only in proportion as we exercise them now.

If, beloved brethren, you are thus living, on the one hand, under the conscious care of your heavenly Father, and, on the other, in the constant exercise of the Christian graces, accept the consolation which our meditations are adapted to afford you. Try to divest yourselves of dread in the anticipation of the dying hour. Endeavour to look on it with cheerfulness. True, you cannot escape it. You can neither control, nor ascertain, its details. But what then? God your

Father has these things in his hands. Leave them with him. He will manage all wisely, and attend to all kindly. Let death come to you when it may, and how it may; you can die like a Christian, if God be there.

There would be weight in these considerations if no Christian had ever died, and if the sentiment they illustrate were altogether a matter of doctrine and theory; the doctrine, however, is amply illustrated by fact, and the theory confirmed by experiment. Many a saint has died ere now, and found by experience that his death has been "precious in the sight of the Lord." What multitudes have borne a similar testimony! How many have triumphed in the final hour, whose fears had previously been, not merely distressing, but almost overwhelming! How many have died calmly, cheerfully, and triumphantly, of whose peaceful end no account can be given but this—"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints"! To this cloud of witnesses another is to be added in the case of our departed friend.

Mr. Benjamin Williams, whose mortal remains a mourning family yesterday consigned to the tomb, was born at Bampton, in Oxfordshire, in the year 1770, or 1771. When a boy he removed with his parents to Reading, and he was there apprenticed to the late Mr. Avery Benham, whose business, on the removal of that gentleman to London, he took. He was baptized, and received into the church in Hosier Street, in 1791, when he was about twenty years of age, and he remained a member of the same church until his death, a period of fifty-five years. He sat under five successive pastors:—Mr. Davis, Mr. Holloway, Mr. Dyer, myself, and Mr. Statham. In his early life he was a frequent attendant on the ministry of the late Mr. Cadogan; he was, however, throughout the whole period, a warmly attached member of the church to which he belonged. Taking a uniform interest in the proceedings of the body, he was eminently punctual in his attendance at church meetings; and he was always ready to labour, when labour was wanting, for the advancement of its welfare. He took an active part in the successive enlargements of the chapel in Hosier Street; and, when the chapel at King's Road was built, his attention to its erection was as assiduous as if the house had been his own. He

manifested a peculiar attachment to the early Sabbath morning prayer-meeting, which for many years he conducted with exemplary punctuality and fervour. In the year 1831 he was chosen a deacon of the church; and he filled this office honourably and usefully for about fifteen years.

He was a man of strong understanding. Although not highly favoured with early education, or with subsequent mental culture, he acquired a large amount of practical and valuable knowledge. He was a man of unblemished integrity. He was frank, open-hearted, generous, and hospitable. He was an affectionate parent, and steadily devoted to the advancement of his children's welfare, temporal and spiritual. He was to me a personal friend, and a nobler or more generous one I never had. He displayed much public spirit, and took an interest in all that concerned the temporal welfare of his fellow-men. At the commencement of the Mechanics' Institution formed in Reading, he was chosen its president; and he was, throughout life, an ardent and consistent friend of liberty, both civil and religious.

If, in common with all men, he had his faults, it may be truly affirmed that these were not inconsistent, either with the sincerity of his piety, or his general nobleness and worth.

Some years before his death he gradually retired from business, and about fourteen months ago he removed to the residence of his sister, Mrs. Leader, at North Court, near this place. The opportunity for affectionate intercourse which this arrangement afforded, was to both a source of much gratification and comfort.

His latest days were marked by an evident ripening for a better world, which, indeed, had been observed in him from the period of his retirement from business. His last illness was short, and a fatal termination of it was not anticipated; it was, indeed, expected that he would recover till within a few hours of his death. He was seized on Thursday, November the 26th, and for two or three days he suffered excruciating pain; his mind, however, was tranquil, and sweetly occupied with anticipations of those unmingled joys which could not be far distant. He realized, and expressed, a firm reliance on the blood of Christ. When his end evidently drew near, he took a solemn leave of his relatives, whom he gathered round his bed for the purpose. Almost his last

words were, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." He died in the afternoon of Tuesday, December 1st, in his seventy-sixth, or seventy-seventh, year.

To you, dear friends, Mr. Williams was but little known; but one who was born and bred among you comes now, in her widowhood, to ask a grave at your hands. Her language is, "Make room for me, that I may bury my dead."

Dear mourner! may the Lord, whom you have long known and trusted, be the portion of your remaining days! Pleasant to you, in your latest years, be the affectionate attentions of the dutiful children who surround you; and salutary to children's children be the counsels you may yet be permitted to impart to them!

To you, dear friends, who form so large and so interesting a group around a father's grave, and do yourselves honour while rendering a tribute of warm affection to his memory, what shall I say? You have been to me more as brothers and sisters, than as friends. I have seen most of you rise through the periods of childhood and of youth. Some of you I have baptized, some of you I have married, some who were once of your number I have laid in the grave. And now you are occupying important stations in life, and, in some instances, are become heads of numerous families. What shall I say to you at the tomb of so revered a parent? Imitate his virtues; above all things, imitate his piety. Some of you are professors of religion, and I should rejoice to know that you all were so; but I do not set it down that only those who profess religion are possessors of it. O be Christians indeed! This was for you his great desire. What comfort could you have had over a father's grave, if he had not been such? By all the preciousness of this consolation to yourselves, I charge you to secure it for your children.

You see what life is, even at the longest and the best. If, like your revered parent, you should be permitted to run through all its stages, and to accomplish all its toils, and to see around you, not your children only, but your children's children, it will be with you, as it has been with him, but a passage, and a swift one, to the grave. Even on this supposition, the earnest voice of wisdom is, "Live for eternity—for heaven!" But the events of your family history must have warned you against illusory anticipations. Some of

your father's children have gone to the tomb before him, and others may quickly follow him. O that one common hope may be the blessed privilege of you all, and therein a preparation for those solemn separations, which, come when they may, are but preludes to the happy reunion of all who love the Saviour, in his everlasting presence and glory !



## “I SHALL DIE IN MY NEST.”\*

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I TURN aside, dear brethren, on this occasion, from the series of discourses on which we have been for some time engaged,† at the call of divine Providence, in the almost sudden and very affecting death of our friend, Mrs. William Alcock. Less than two years ago did she enter into the conjugal relation; and now, after a few days of severe suffering, she has been removed by God’s mysterious and awful hand from the domestic scene which her presence constituted into an earthly paradise, leaving one to endure a sorrow he can never measure, and one—a lovely boy about twelve months old—to suffer a loss he can never know. Such an occurrence speaks aloud to the family in the bosom of which it has happened. They desire to hearken to the counsels of Christian wisdom which it suggests; and we all may listen to such themes with profit. As the basis of our meditations, I take the following words:—

“THEN I SAID, I SHALL DIE IN MY NEST.”—*Job xxix. 18.*

These words express the feeling of the ancient patriarch in the time of his prosperity.

“O that I were as in months past,  
As in the days when God preserved me;  
When his candle shined upon my head,  
And when by his light I walked through darkness;  
As I was in the days of my youth,  
When the secret of God was upon my tabernacle;  
When the Almighty was yet with me,  
When my children were about me;  
When I washed my steps with butter,  
And the rock poured me out rivers of oil;  
When I went out to the gate through the city;  
When I prepared my seat in the street!

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\* Preached at Devonshire Square Chapel, November 24th, 1850, on occasion of the death of Mrs. William Alcock.

† A Series of Discourses on the History of Christ.

The young men saw me, and hid themselves;  
 And the aged arose, and stood up.  
 The princes refrained talking,  
 And laid their hand on their mouth.  
 The nobles held their peace,  
 And their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth.  
 When the ear heard me, then it blessed me;  
 And when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me;  
 Because I delivered the poor that cried,  
 And the fatherless, and him that had none to help him.  
 The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me;  
 And I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.  
 I put on righteousness, and it clothed me:  
 My judgment was as a robe and a diadem.  
 I was eyes to the blind,  
 And feet was I to the lame.  
 I was a father to the poor;  
 And the cause which I knew not I searched out.  
 And I brake the jaws of the wicked,  
 And plucked the spoil out of his teeth.  
 THEN I SAID, I SHALL DIE IN MY NEST."

Ver. 1-18.

The sentiment which thus anticipates the permanence of existing prosperity is not unnatural. It may be said, perhaps, to be, in the first instance, rather a wish than an expectation; a wish, however, which practically ripens into an expectation, through the power which our desires have to cause in us at least a partial blindness. What we do wish it is proverbially easy to believe. And hence the proneness of man's heart, in all ages, to suggest in prosperous times the language uttered by one who lived long ago, "My mountain stands strong, I shall never be moved."

To no aspect of our condition does this sentiment attach itself so strongly as to domestic life. The warm affections in which the conjugal union originates, and the entire satisfaction and repose in which they issue, contribute to this result. All other pleasures have in them the partial, the temporary, the changeable; they admit of degrees, and may become steps towards further successes; but domestic affection at once absorbs the whole being, and occupies prospectively the whole life, knowing no time, and awaiting no change. And this sentiment becomes only the more strong when the family circle enlarges, and domestic sympathies are multiplied. Then each is more important to the other than ever. The tenderness of the gentle and the help of the strong become, to our sense, indispensable complements one of another;

and, because neither can be spared, our fond hearts reckon that both will be continued. We make our nest all firm without and soft within, and then fancy we shall both live and die in it.

It is, however, nothing more than a fancy. While, on the one hand, the admitted frailty of human life supplies to us a general warning, what fearful and crushing events, on the other, bring home to us a sense of our danger! Not only do the mourners go about the streets, conveying to their long home the once adored idols of the domestic hearth, but scenes of recent gladness are darkened by an ever-brooding sorrow, and hearts lately bounding with joy are broken and inconsolable.

The philosophy of the human heart is to ignore these facts, and to be deaf to these warning voices. In the realization of such calamities we cannot be happy; let us therefore turn away our eyes from them. When they come upon us it will be time enough to think of them; let us enjoy the present as we may, without marring our joys by anticipations so melancholy. To-day, at least, we are happy. And this is, perhaps, the best philosophy to which human nature, left to its own resources, can addict itself. Why should it spontaneously generate terrors which it cannot allay, or inflict upon itself one moment earlier than is inevitable wounds for which it can supply no balm?

It is the prerogative of religion, however, to assume a different attitude, and to look upon the lot of man with a different eye. Her counsel is, Live near the grave. Remember your latter end. Realize the frailty of your choicest treasures. Be mindful every hour of the rapidity with which death may snatch them away from you. And she can reconcile such counsel with our happiness, and even make the observance of it conducive to our higher enjoyment.

Does religion, then, suppress the gentler feelings, and make obdurate man's heart? Far from it. On the contrary, the very opposite may be affirmed. By the corruption of human nature, its very springs of love, although not absolutely dried up, are at once diminished and poisoned. An intense selfishness is thrown into man's heart, which renders him at once less apt to love, and more ignorant how to love aright. This is a mischief which religion rectifies. The generous and self-renouncing re-appear in the sanctified heart, and

a thousand refinements of affection have birth there, by which its real pleasures acquire a tone far more elevated and intense. It may then be supposed, that the same element which enhances the joy of possession must aggravate the sorrow for its loss; but, in truth, it is not so. Again the reverse is the truth. If the Christian has the heavier burden to bear, he is better instructed how to bear it; and, if his heart-strings, when swept by the hand of sorrow, vibrate to the touch with an unwonted tenderness, there will yet be found in the notes they give forth a tone of tranquillity and peace which none but the sanctified heart can yield.

It is my present purpose to open to you the process by which this important and salutary end is secured.

I. In the first place, it is in the nature of religion to create a superior affection. Under its influence the eye is opened to the glory of God, and the heart is awakened to the importance of his love. A sense of distance from him becomes intensely painful, and reconciliation to him through Christ Jesus the chief and indispensable felicity. To be at peace with God, and to enjoy his lovingkindness—to love him, and to be loved by him—now constitutes the supreme good, in the possession of which the heart rests with absolute delight, as if perpetually repeating the language of the Psalmist—"My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise."

It is too little to say that this affection is stronger than even the tenderest of the domestic affections. It is infinitely stronger. There is no proper comparison to be instituted between the excellences of the creature, whether real or imaginary, and the glory of the Creator. To see God, is surely to contemplate a beauty which eclipses even the fairest works of his hands. To love him as he deserves demands the whole heart, and at once engages and fills it.

The condition I am describing is not one in which the love of creatures becomes impossible. Far otherwise. It leaves uninvaded the proper sphere of the domestic affections; but it confines them to their proper sphere. It makes them secondary and subordinate. Without religion they are primary and supreme. The heart that does not worship God worships the creature, and puts an idol in the place of the Deity. The position which should be occupied by the divine being vacant, that which is nearest to the divine, although

at an infinite distance, naturally usurps it, and becomes, what it was never fitted to become, and what it never can satisfactorily be, the *portion* of the soul.

From this unnatural force of unsanctified domestic affections arises the excessive bitterness of their disappointment. Those who so love may well tremble at the perilous situation in which their affection places them. They have made to themselves gods of clay, and have identified their supreme happiness with the breath that is in the nostrils. Their ALL is now embarked in a frail vessel of bulrushes, and is at the mercy of every wave. By the accidents which beset every step, or the diseases which impregnate every breeze, they may at any moment be spoiled of their entire inheritance; nothing being left to them but to cry, like Micah after the men who had robbed him of his teraphim, "Ye have taken away my gods, and what have I more?"

From the approach of such terrors the man of sincere piety is happily secure. Calamity, indeed, may invade his dwelling, like other men's, and the desire of his eyes, as of theirs, may be smitten with a stroke; but the stroke is not to him what it is to them. It will deprive him of a precious treasure, but it will not rob him of his all. It will touch him in a tender place, but it will not invade his most cherished love. His portion is the Lord; a portion all-sufficient and everlasting, at once satisfying and secure. He will weep as other men weep, but he will not be in bitterness as other men are in bitterness, still less, as they often are, in despair. "I have lost a treasure," he will say, "but my inheritance remains; my creature love has been dashed, but my God abides; the cistern at which I drank has been broken, but the fountain ever flows."

II. In the second place, while religion involves in its very nature the creation of a new and superior affection, it also unfolds a new and more important sphere of existence. It opens to the eye of faith the things unseen, and engages for them a fixed and influential regard. This, indeed, is one of the essential characteristics of a Christian, that he looks at the things which are not seen, and that he so looks at them that he may be said not to look at the things which are seen (2 Cor. iv. 18). Not, assuredly, that he treats the things of this world with an absolute disregard, since no man will be found, either more attentive to the duties, or more alive to



the enjoyments, of the present life, but he treats them with a relative disregard. Putting the two worlds side by side, the seen and the unseen, he beholds in the one the temporal, in the other the eternal; and the comparison reduces the former to an all but utter insignificance. What is time to eternity, but a moment against endless duration? And what can all the interests of time be in such a comparison, but as those of a moment too! In such a view the great concerns of man are the concerns of his soul and his salvation; his deliverance from the wrath to come; his peace with God; his title to heaven and meetness for it; his walk with God, and his hope of glory. True, he is yet a denizen of this world, and he cannot be wholly dead to its interests and affections; but he is a pilgrim and a stranger in it, and he is comparatively dead to them. He reads the instruction, "Brethren, the time is short: it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they possessed not; and they that use this world as though they used it not" (1 Cor. vii. 29-31): and, if not perfectly, yet in spirit and in substance, he acts upon it.

Hence, as all the interests of time are subordinated to those of eternity, so, in common with the rest, are those of domestic life. And in this respect the man of piety stands broadly distinguished from the man of the world. Speaking of the latter, we must say that he looks at the things which are seen, and not at those which are unseen. All his interests are temporal; those of eternity, whatever be their comparative magnitude, affect him not. Hence temporal objects operate on him with a power altogether unchecked. He buys and sells, rejoices and weeps, marries and gives in marriage, as attending to the most momentous concerns he knows of, or regards; and, if in these he is thwarted, he sorrows with a proportionate intensity. He has made his household nest, and triumphs in its tenderness and beauty; but the ruthless hand of death spoils it of its most cherished tenant, and, in mingled anger and despair, he scatters its now hated fragments to the winds. "It was the only thing my heart was set upon," he exclaims; "and life is worthless to me now."

How different the Christian! His heart, not less deeply

wounded, could easily vent itself in utterance not less vehement; but there is a solemn, yet kindly, restraining power. "I knew," he is prepared to say, "that I had here no continuing city. I *am* a pilgrim and a stranger, and in a very little while I, too, shall be gone. My 'light affliction' is but for a moment, and then comes 'a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'"

III. In the third place, it is in the nature of religion to exhibit all our earthly pleasures in a new and more interesting light.

Surveying the brighter aspects of his condition—his health, his wealth, his family and friends—it is in the heart of the worldly man to say, "This is mine; either my right, or my acquisition: and why should it be taken from me?" He thinks that God ought to give him health; he feels that he has obtained his riches by his labour, and even the conjugal affections he enjoys by his assiduities; and he exclaims, "They are my own."

On the other hand, the man of piety, surveying the same benefits, exclaims, "They are not mine, but God's. They are his gifts to me, unworthy of the least of them: and I take them thankfully at his hand."

This reverent and grateful recognition of God, as the giver of every good and perfect gift, and of those (now especially in view) which constitute the gladness of the domestic circle, at once enhances the pleasure of their possession, and relaxes the grasp with which they are held. Receiving them as of his donation, we at once perceive in them his love, and feel that we hold them during his pleasure. He that in sovereign mercy gave, in sovereign wisdom may take away. He does but what he pleases with his own; and, assured as we are that, for his children, he will do all things well, it is at once our duty and our privilege to acquiesce in his will. How, indeed, should we resist it, who have so often and so solemnly said to him, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory"? How should we resist it, who know that the course he has marked out for us has been chosen by infinite wisdom and love? How should we resist it, who could find no other hands to which to intrust our affairs, and should not dare to take them into our own? No, my brethren. The Christian in all tribulations has only to say, "My times

are in thy hand." "Let the Lord do with me what seemeth him good" (Psalm xxxi. 15).

And hence, even in the most painful bereavements, the Christian endures separation without the desperate struggle which attends similar afflictions in the experience of the ungodly. They yield nothing, but hold their treasures with a tenacious grasp as long as it is possible. What they must part with is taken from them as by force, which prevails only because they cannot resist it. Not so with the Christian. He gives up, as though it were at a request, the gift which God is pleased to resume. He entreats, but he is not rebellious. When his Father's will is made known, he complains no more. His language is, "If this cup may not pass away from me except I drink it, thy will be done." "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; and blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job i. 21).

IV. In the fourth place, it is in the nature of religion to merge our domestic pleasures in a higher and more intense enjoyment. It is one thing to enjoy the creature, it is another to enjoy the Creator. The former has undoubtedly its sweetness, but the latter has a sweetness unspeakably superior. Now it is the privilege of a Christian to call God his own, and to enjoy the lovingkindness of the Lord as his continual feast. It is his privilege also, not only to enjoy God in himself by a continual affectionate fellowship, but to enjoy God in his gifts by receiving them as expressions of his love. Viewed in this light, all the comforts by which we are surrounded are only so many manifestations to us of divine goodness, that is, of God himself as the fountain of good, and we behold in them both the gift and the giver. Two sources of gratification are thus opened to us at once; the one being the gift itself in its adaptation to our nature and circumstances, and the other the kindness of the heavenly Friend who bestows it. Now, of these two gratifications, undoubtedly the latter is the most elevated and intense. That I have bread to eat is a pleasure; but in receiving that bread as from a Father's hand I find a much greater pleasure. That my heart has been knit to a worthy companion in conjugal love, is beyond question a high felicity; but that in this best of earthly gifts I have a token of my heavenly Father's love, is to me a far higher delight. The enjoyment of the creature, therefore, is always the least

part of the Christian's happiness; its great substance and power lie in the enjoyment of God in the creature.

Now the enjoyment of God is, as a Christian's privilege, indestructible and unchangeable. The channel through which it flows may vary, but the divine lovingkindness is an inexhaustible fountain, and has an uninterrupted stream. When it expresses itself in the bestowment of precious gifts, we enjoy it in them; and when it is manifested in their absence, or even in their withdrawal, we enjoy it without them: God in the creature, if creature good is ours; God without the creature, if creature good be taken away. Thus, spiritually regarded, the domestic affections constitute but one of many forms of the enjoyment of God, that great felicity, of which, although the accidents may vary, the substance remains unchangeable.

It is far otherwise with the man of the world. The creature is his all. He possesses a domestic companion whom he loves, but nothing beyond; and, when this perishable treasure decays, he loses his all. Death, when it invades his hearth, is not merely a change of forms, but a destruction of realities; not merely a variation of the pipes, but a breaking up of the cistern. It is for the Christian alone to say in these tender bereavements, "My God, it was thyself that I most enjoyed in thy gifts; and thyself, though in other modes, I shall still enjoy."

V. In the last place, it is in the nature of religion to diffuse its influence through two worlds, and to link time and eternity together. As it brings the commanding influences of eternity to regulate our present conduct, so it carries the influences of time into the world that is to come. Whether we eat, or drink, or whatever we do, as Christians, we do it to the glory of God, and thus on earth accumulate a treasure in the heavens; for God is not unrighteous to forget our work and labour of love. Nor, in truth, shall **WE** forget them.

The great principle which connects the two worlds we are to inhabit together, is announced by the apostle in the following terms: "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap" (Gal. vi. 7). The structure of the divine administration obviously demands the memory of present transactions as the groundwork of our future condition; since without it there could be no judgment, no retribution.



On the supposition that the deeds were forgotten, there could be no significancy in the pleasures or the pains which might be hereafter annexed to them as their recompense. Accordingly, the scriptural representations of the future world are in all cases founded on the conception of a perfect remembrance of the works which are brought into judgment. But, if transactions are to be remembered, the recognition of the persons who have taken part in them seems necessarily to follow. Association is an essential element in our present condition, and the conception of it cannot easily be separated from our future one. It is in our companionships that much of our character has been developed, and by them that many of our motives have been supplied; and it does not seem possible that, in an isolated manner, due recompense can be made. As we have done evil or good *together*, so together it would seem that retribution must be suffered or enjoyed.

This connexion between the present and the future world is in no respect more interesting than in its bearing on pious friendships, and, among these, it bears with especial force on the conjugal relation. I am perfectly aware that this relation itself, like the whole class to which it belongs, pertains exclusively to the present life; since in "that world," according to the testimony of our Lord, "they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are equal unto the angels" (Luke xx. 35): but, if pious friendships generally may be regarded as extending themselves to the world to come, surely this most intimate and tender of friendships must be so too. The deeply touching occurrences of domestic life are undoubtedly among the very last which can be forgotten, and the profound sympathies which they have called into exercise among the very last to be extinguished. If no longer I clasp one to my bosom as a wife, and others as my children, what difference will this change make to the recollection that we have prayed, and wept, and toiled together, pilgrims in loving company to the heavenly land? And how, without such recollections, can we bear to the footstool of the heavenly Father the grateful acclamations which are his due?

Yes, my brethren, the pious friendship which may justly be regarded as involved in the conjugal tie when it binds children of God together, is born for immortality. I speak of children of God, because I cannot conceive of the opposite case as leading to any other recognition than one of a melan-



choly and agonizing kind. But pious husbands and wives have surely within them the elements of an everlasting friendship, and may, in this respect, defy the grave. The tearful and expressive silence of the deathbed may, in their case, be interrupted by words of deep and triumphant gladness. "We part, my beloved; but not for ever. We part, but not for long. Nay, we part but for a moment, a little moment, ere we meet again. Our conjugal union expires, but our union of the soul survives; and an eternity is before us, in which our friendship shall expand, and minister to us ever new delights, in the presence and praise of him who hath made us heirs together of the grace of life."

It is by the force of considerations like these, my brethren, that religion has power to reconcile our condition with our happiness, to allay the terrors which the frailty of mortality attaches to our tender affections, and to make it even conducive to our highest enjoyment to familiarize ourselves with the grave. Under the influence of such considerations I trust, my beloved friends, you have been enabled to meet this afflictive bereavement; and I pray that the consolations they are adapted to yield may be largely enjoyed by you.

Mrs. William Alcock, whose affecting decease has given rise to these reflections, was the second daughter of Mr. John Southgate, of Old Change, in this city. Religious truth was instilled into her mind from her infancy. Residing at Pebble Coombe, about six miles from Dorking, in Surrey, attendance on divine worship there was often attended with difficulty; yet did her youthful steps, in company with two beloved sisters, cheerfully encounter the toil, and not without a blessing. At the age of sixteen she became a member of the Independent church at Dorking. So far as opportunity offered, she exerted herself in ways of religious activity and usefulness; and this more especially during that portion of the year which the family spent in London, where they enjoyed Christian fellowship at Surrey Chapel. On her marriage, in December, 1848, her attendance was partially with the congregation in this place, and, had her life been spared, she would probably have entered more fully into communion with us. That she was eminently amiable and pious is the testimony of all who knew her—according to the extent of my acquaintance with her, I bear a similar testimony—and the warm affection she

inspired in the several members of the family into which she had entered strongly confirms it. As a wife and a mother her conduct was truly exemplary. Her care was to anticipate every want, and her hands were often found to have ministered to the gratification of desire before it could be expressed.

But short was the charm which our excellent friend was permitted to spread over the domestic hearth, and hasty indeed was her summons to a different sphere. After a wedded life of only twenty-three months, her lovely course was most unexpectedly terminated by an illness of six brief, but sorrowful, days. Suffering, not so much from pain, as from a sense of extreme weakness, and of almost total incapacity for mental exertion, conversation was, for the most part, precluded; nor was it pressed by affectionate friends upon her slumbering powers, since no apprehension was entertained of a fatal issue of her malady. While in the enjoyment of health, her habit had been so eminently devout—her Bible was her daily and constant companion—that neither evidence of her piety, nor affirmation of her hope, needed to be sought for in the period of her sickness; so that no alarm was created when it was found that the last enemy had made his approach unawares, alike to others and to herself, and that, if repentance had then been necessary, the mental power was wanting for its exercise. Happily for her, all that sickness required had in health been secured. Her thoughts, however, were of life, and of living for God. At her desire, and with a painful consciousness on her part of the imperfect manner in which she was able to join in it, domestic worship was conducted in her chamber. Little apprehending how very soon she would be called to part from them, she expressed on one occasion a touching jealousy lest her beloved husband and her darling babe should become her idols, and her feeling that in this respect God was jealous of his honour; adding her earnest hope that she should be enabled to train up her child for God—a duty now transferred to another, but a scarcely less affectionate, hand. At times she repeated portions of the hymn which we have sung this evening, and which was, in health, often on her lips:—

"O for a closer walk with God,  
A calm and heavenly frame;  
A light to shine upon the road  
That leads me to the Lamb."

During a passing gleam of consciousness in the forenoon of the day preceding her death—the Lord's day morning—her venerable father said to her, "You love Jesus Christ?" to which she answered with promptness and fervour, "O yes, father, I hope I do." The next return of consciousness was for a single moment only—but a moment for which her sorrowing relatives are inexpressibly thankful; it was that in which she received, first her father's kiss, then her husband's—and expired. Was not her next greeting that of her adorable Saviour and her Lord?

Mrs. Alcock died on the 11th of November, 1850, in the thirtieth year of her age; and was buried in the Cemetery at Norwood, in the family grave, in which, only two years before, the remains of her beloved mother were deposited. Not far were they divided in death; now are they for ever united in glory.

So flattering and fallacious is the thought which anticipates the permanence of our domestic joys! We say, "I shall die in my nest;" but there is an awful, yet not an ungracious hand, by which our nest is broken up, and its tender pleasures turned into sadness. Wherefore, my beloved friends, but to diminish the force of our earthly attachments, to rouse our spiritual energies, and to stir us up for heavenward flight? Let us understand and learn the lesson. This is not our rest, nor can it be. Our home is where they are gone who have left us, and beckon us to follow. What, then, remains, but that we be followers, with steady feet and joyful hope, of them who, through faith and patience, are inheriting the promises? Wherefore, my brethren, let us gird up the loins of our mind; let us be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace which is to be brought UNTO US at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

## ON THE DIFFICULTIES OF SPECULATIVE INQUIRY.\*

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“When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me.”—*Psalm* lxxiii. 16.

KNOWLEDGE is pleasant to the mind as light is sweet to the eye. And there seems to be full warrant for this kind of enjoyment. The sun, with its glorious fires, is lighted up for the eye; for the eye, also, the face of nature is illumined with its beams; and, in like manner, the universe seems to be outspread before the mind on purpose to be known. At what point need the searching gaze of the eye be arrested? Or where need intelligent scrutiny be stayed? Do not nature and providence court investigation, and recompense it with precious discoveries, ever new? Nay, more; a ceaseless pursuit of knowledge may be said to be obligatory. Our intellectual faculty is given to be employed, and its inaction would be as culpable as a voluntary blindness. Is it not in his works and ways that God makes himself manifest? And is it not our duty to trace him to the utmost, that we may recognize and adore?

There is, however, a limit to the pleasantness of knowledge. Its pursuit may become to us even painful; in the words of our text, “*too painful*.” What, for example, is more pleasant than to survey the providence of God with its vast benignities? And yet God’s providence has in every age exhibited some fearful aspects, forbidding too close a scrutiny, and throwing back even the most resolute inquirer upon the inscrutable pleasure of the sovereign Ruler. It was with a problem of this sort that the Psalmist was engaged when he used the words before us. He “saw the prosperity of the wicked,” and it troubled him. “When I thought to know this,” he says, “it was too painful for me,

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\* Preached at Exeter Hall, London, June 8th, 1851.

until I went into the sanctuary of God." In that position, the solemn retributions of another world presented themselves as counterbalancing the inequalities of this.

Or take another illustration. What can be more pleasant than to investigate the intellectual nature of man, his position, his prospects, and his destiny, under the government of God? Or, peradventure, to take a still wider range, and grapple with the vast problem of being, and of the universe? Yet inquiries of this sort lead to dark and fearful issues. However clear the light may be which is thrown upon matters of immediate moment, the speculative inquirer is soon introduced to profound questions and insoluble problems. Here, for example, is the outburst and prevalence of moral evil under the government of a wise and holy God. Here, again, is a vast amount of animal suffering in the creation of a benevolent God. Here is a being of free and responsible agency under a system of eternal predestination and irreversible decrees. Here, moreover, are two worlds, the world within us and the world without us—the subjective and the objective; and no one can demonstrate the link that connects the two, or explain the process by which we take cognizance of the external world. Some tell us that the subjective is illusory, some that the objective is illusory, and some that both are so, all things being only modifications of the Deity.

At a period when, by the extended culture of a literary taste and of reading habits, the elements of speculative philosophy come to be widely known, difficulties of this class have their influence, and, probably, a very considerable influence. They operate in two ways. Some are by them thrown into a state of general scepticism. They are strong thinkers. They study hard. They can grasp nothing less than the problem of the universe, and they are resolved to find out the solution of it. They will know all things; and the obstructions they meet with, and the difficulties in which their inquiries land them, annoy and vex them. "We thought," say they, "to know this," and we are sure we have brought to the problem no mean powers, no insignificant industry; but we cannot, it is too high, "too painful," for us. To be thus shut up within a narrow circle of mystery, to be refused an answer to so many interesting questions, makes them almost angry. The language of their conduct



is, "We can do nothing, we will do nothing, thus denied and embarrassed, but struggle and complain." If we hold out the Bible to them, and say, Take counsel of this; they exclaim, "The Bible? Explain to us the mystery of the universe."

There are others who do not feel this influence so strongly, but who, nevertheless, are embarrassed and distressed by what they come to know, or hear, of the difficulties of speculative philosophy. It seems to them as though these loudly bewailed difficulties might involve some very important deficiency, if not one fatally injurious to truth, and duty, and human welfare; and their fears are aggravated by their ignorance, inasmuch as they arise in reference to subjects which they are not able personally to master, or to estimate. It is likely enough, that by an influence of this sort the commencement of piety may in some cases be obstructed; and it is certain, that by it the progress of piety has in some instances, perhaps in not a few, been vexed and harassed by painful and afflictive thoughts.

Now it is my purpose, on this occasion, to suggest a few considerations by which this feeling of painfulness may be mitigated, or removed.

I begin with a confession. I confess that I am not in possession of any solvent for the difficulties of speculative philosophy. I cannot solve the problem of the universe. I admit the reality of these difficulties, and their insolubility. I say this, however, that they are all of them reducible to a common element, and to a simple expression. They do not, either of them, nor all of them together, prove that there is anything really amiss in the constitution of the universe, or that the system of things, in any manner, or in any case, is out of joint: they prove only this—the imperfection of our knowledge—nothing more. Our knowledge is restricted; and we are thus shut up within a circle of mystery. That is the truth, and the whole truth. Now respecting these restrictions of our knowledge I submit several observations.

I. The first observation I make is, that these restrictions of our knowledge are only part of a general system.

One might suppose, indeed, from the manner in which the difficulties of speculative philosophy have been announced, that they were the only difficulties in the way of human inquiry; and, if, indeed, it were so that there are no mysteries

anywhere else, it might be deemed hard to find them here. But we know that the fact is not so. There are mysteries, not only in speculative philosophy, but in philosophy of every kind. The animal world, for example, is full of mystery. The problem of animal life is to this day as mysterious and unsolved, and as probably insoluble, as it ever was. Pathology—the doctrine of disease—is as dark to this hour as any doctrine in theology. The vegetable world is full of mystery. There is not a flower, or a blade of grass, that has not in it more of mystery than all the wise men in the world can remove. The mineral world is full of mystery. Scarcely a stone can you take up, but it presents to you the inexplicable marvels, either of chemical affinity, or of crystallization. To mention these things is only to name a few out of a multitude. Everything around us is mystery. At every point is our knowledge restricted, and theoretical inquiry brought to a stand.

Is there any cause for wonder, then, at the mysteries and difficulties which attach themselves to speculative philosophy? The great questions connected with the problem of the universe are involved in darkness, not because there is any infelicitous peculiarity in them, but because they are among the objects of human knowledge, all of which are equally involved in darkness. The entire sphere of human investigation being thus restricted, it is altogether most natural and congruous that the region of speculative philosophy should be so. You cannot explain the mind of man, and its mode of communication with the external world? Very well; there are a thousand things besides that you cannot explain. You cannot explain the existence of suffering among the animal tribes, or the cause of evil among mankind? Very well. We find mystery in every stone, and in every plant; what wonder, then, if, when we come to inquire into the philosophy of man, and of God's dealings with him, that we should find mystery there? What should we say if we did not? We should say, this is surely not a part of the same universe; or, if it be, this is the greatest mystery of all. And, as mystery should not surprise us, so neither should it vex us. Who is there that frets and murmurs about the mystery that there is in a crystal or a flower; in the process of nutrition, or in the conditions of disease? Then why should a man who is so easily reconciled to all mysteries

besides, be made unhappy when he finds that there are mysteries in his own intellectual nature, or in that of his fellow-man, and in the ways of God to both? May we not fairly say, Be consistent? Either be displeased with all mysteries, or be reconciled to all.

II. My second observation upon this matter is, that restricted knowledge is an essential element of our being.

It would almost seem, from the complaints uttered by speculative philosophers, that their difficulties had been imposed arbitrarily, and that it would have been easy for us to have been made to see and understand all these things. But this is not so. It is, indeed, not only because we are human, but because we are created, that there are mysteries to us; for there are of necessity mysteries to all created beings. It may be, perhaps—though we cannot speak positively—that to God all things are clear—(for my own part, I do not feel at all certain that God's being is not to this hour a mystery to himself); but to *him only* can all things be clear. "His understanding is infinite:" but infinite knowledge cannot be possessed by any but an infinite being. To all created beings there must be mystery. They are finite, and the finite cannot grasp the infinite. They are but parts, and each but a very small part; and the parts cannot be conceived of as capable of comprehending the whole. To be dissatisfied, then, because of our restricted knowledge, is to be dissatisfied that we are creatures. We have an ambition, every one of us, to be the Creator! None of us can be satisfied unless we be divine! Every one of us must be a god! We must possess the attribute, that is to say, of perfect knowledge. Is not this, even allowing something for the pride of man's poor heart, and even in the opinion of these philosophers themselves, being a little too proud?

But not proud only. To be discontented with imperfect knowledge is to be discontented with existence itself. Without restricted knowledge our existence is an impossibility. He who quarrels with the restrictions of his knowledge, quarrels with the very possibility of his own being. The language of his heart is, "I would rather not exist at all, than exist without knowing all things." Is there, then, nothing, no end or purpose, for which it can be worth while for a creature to exist? Is there nothing on earth, or in heaven, worth living for, although this one desire be denied?

III. In the third place I observe, that our knowledge, with all its restrictions, is amply sufficient for all practical purposes.

According to some, indeed, the mysteries which attend our existence supersede the cultivation of a practical regard to religion. We can know nothing certainly of our own being. Perhaps the external world is an illusion; perhaps the internal world is so; perhaps all is God, and responsibility a fiction. It is enough to reply to this foolish effort to throw the moral world into confusion, that, whatever illusions may attend our being, they are at all events universal, and not partial, and they ought to affect all departments of our conduct alike. If they supersede moral action, they should equally supersede secular action; if they render it needless to take care of the soul, they render it equally needless to take care of the body. If spiritual desire be illusory, so is hunger. If a sense of guilt be illusory, so is inflammation. If heaven and hell be illusory, so are sensible pleasures and perils. Yet the possible illusoriness of the earthly and the sensible withholds no one, not even philosophers themselves, from treating them as realities. Illusory as the external world may be, every man toils in it as though its seemings were substantial facts. Illusory as the internal world may be, every man lives as though his appetites and passions demanded substantial gratifications. And, though all things may possibly be God, men distribute rewards and punishments one among another without scruple. Why, then, does this system of practical action stop precisely at matters relating to the soul, to eternity, to God? There is clearly the same reason for treating these as realities, as there is for treating secular objects so; and there is much more reason for treating them with a solemn and anxious earnestness. O! if you treat anything as an illusion, let it be the body, not the soul. Do not eat, do not drink, do not sleep: but—be reconciled to God, and flee from the wrath to come!

What argument is there, however, in saying that anything is an illusion, and not a reality? An illusion is a reality if it be really an illusion, and as a reality it requires to be treated. And illusions which are in their nature permanent make the same demands upon us as if they were substantial verities. The great passion of human life is an illusion, a



state of feeling founded upon a set of false judgments. Yet who disregards it? Who knows not that it is the spring of our highest earthly joys, and the basis of our most important social duties? The element of its power is its permanence. And thus, even granting that all things are illusory, this detracts nothing from their practical importance if they also be permanent. Constant phenomena are to all intents and purposes facts. Now of the constancy and permanence of all the phenomena within us and without us there can be no doubt; and, consequently, all of them claim to be regarded and treated as facts. God has evidently given life for practical ends; and to employ it for practical ends, as it is man's wisdom in things temporal, so is it man's higher and more incumbent wisdom in things eternal.

Practical purposes being the great purposes for which life is given, that is the most valuable knowledge which conduces to their attainment; and, if knowledge is given us sufficient for the practical ends for which we live, there is clearly no very urgent reason, if any, for complaint. Now it is practical knowledge emphatically which God, generally speaking, has imparted to us. During the first ages of the world, certainly, men acted upon practical, and not upon theoretical, grounds. They must have acted thus for many ages, or they could not have acted at all. Even now theoretical knowledge is studied and mastered by the few, and not by the many. To accomplish the practical purposes of life God did not teach anybody theory. Men fed themselves on the fruits of the field a long time before they studied the anatomy of plants. Navigation was practised a long while before any theory of the winds was made out—even if such a theory be made out at this day. Boats went up and down the rivers a long while before men knew anything about the theory of the tides. Men practised physic before they knew anything about the theory of health and disease; indeed, so far as I can understand, medical practice is in great part empirical still. It is the universal habit, and the unquestionable wisdom, of mankind, to avail themselves of whatever practical knowledge they possess for the attainment of practical ends, without waiting for theoretical knowledge, or troubling themselves respecting the want of it. Now I ask nothing more than this for religion; and I do not see why it should have less. Our knowledge is imperfect; but for all



practical purposes there is in the Bible information enough. If man will consult it in a teachable spirit, and for a practical end, it will tell him all things. It will tell him his duty: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself." It will declare his danger: "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men." It will show him his remedy, proclaiming to him the "faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," even the chief of them. It will prescribe his duty: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." It will encourage his hope: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." All this is in terms of pre-eminent simplicity and plainness. There are no difficulties here: he that runs may read, and the least instructed child may understand. Thus all that concerns our safety and our duty is plain enough. What is it, then, that we cannot understand? Why, we cannot understand how evil came into the world under the government of God. We cannot understand how responsibility in the creature can be reconciled with the predestination of the Creator. We cannot understand by what law it is that we get acquainted with the external world. Perhaps not. But of what consequence is this? Here is instruction that tells you how your present and future welfare may be secured; carry it out; obey it, without waiting for the solution of your difficulties. Men act thus in other things. Do you see boatmen loitering on the banks of the Thames till they understand the theory of lunar influences? Are people kept back from distant adventure until they understand the theory of the trade-winds? Do you see men refusing to practise physic until they can justify on theory the prescriptions they give? Do you see the farmers standing idle, resolved to grow no corn until they understand the principles of vegetable physiology? Assuredly, there are no such exhibitions of folly as these. And yet shall we see a man with a precious immortal soul, liable to perdition, and standing on the brink of the grave, saying, I will not repent of sin and believe in Jesus till I can construct a complete system of philosophy, and solve the problem of the universe!

This is egregious and most fearful trifling. The immediate value of the practical results to be obtained, and in part the urgent pressure of our bodily wants, prevents such infatuation in relation to secular things ; it is only with respect to the remoter interests of religion and eternity that so culpable a course is pursued. Yet the inestimable value of the soul, and the vastness of the world to come, place this at the very head of all questions of practical wisdom. The salvation of the soul should, before all things, be treated as a practical question. Wait, if you please, before you eat bread, until you understand the growth of corn ; wait, if you please, before you take medicine, until you comprehend the theory of disease ; wait, if you please, before you escape from the flames, until you are informed how the fire originated, and whence the ladder has been brought for your deliverance ; but wait not till you understand any philosophic theory, wait not one moment, before you repent of sin, submit to Jesus, and make sure of deliverance from the wrath to come.

IV. I observe, fourthly, that restricted knowledge is an important element in our moral condition.

God pursues a course towards us by which he applies tests to character. This is a state of probation, intended to bring out what is in man's heart. Now a state of restricted knowledge is adapted and requisite to this end. If we knew all things, the scope for trial would be very much diminished, if not annihilated. For this reason it may be that we are restricted in our knowledge of some points, on which it would have been possible for our knowledge to have been perfect. Many things, doubtless, God hides from us for a time for wise purposes ; things which might have been known, but which are better concealed. There is a certain measure of concealment necessary to a state of probation. Statesmen, diplomatists, generals, in the execution of extensive designs, are obliged to conceal some things, things which, if fully known, would render their plans liable to be frustrated ; and, on a similar principle, the all-wise God, while showing us all that is necessary for our welfare, shrouds himself in part in darkness, that, without premature exposure, he may work out his great and glorious ends. And this gives scope for faith on our part : faith as opposed to sight ; faith in God's testimony concerning things which are not seen ; faith in himself ; submission to him, and reliance

upon his wisdom and mercy in his dealings towards us. Now to declaim against all mystery, and to say that everything shall be told us now, is to place ourselves in a position highly dictatorial and foolish. Is it for the clay in the hands of the potter to say, *After this fashion shalt thou make me?* My brethren, it does not become us thus to act. It is not competent to us to refuse the moral probation for which we are created, nor is it any demonstration of either wisdom, or right feeling, to fret against the conditions of the equitable trial to which, in divine though mysterious wisdom, we are subjected.

V. I observe, in the fifth place, that, with all its restrictions, the field of our knowledge is marvellously ample.

Judge of it by comparison. Set yourselves beside the beasts of the field: they are placed in the same world, beneath the light of the same sun, in the midst of the same scenery, and they are creatures of the same power. But how small a field of knowledge is theirs! Ah! if you were shut up in a circle of mystery as small as theirs, you might, perhaps, complain.

Judge of it by fact. Look attentively at the immense field of observation and knowledge which is before you. Take a glance at science in its various departments: the department of natural science, either as it relates to this world, in the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms, or as it relates to other worlds, there being comprehended under the single term astronomy more than a world, and almost a universe; the department of intellectual science, including not only the mind of man, but the entire spiritual world, with all its problems so far as they are within our reach; the department of moral science, including individual duty, and social problems of the greatest magnitude; and, crowning all these, revealed science, or the knowledge of God and of his works from the light that is thrown upon them by this blessed book. By these few words I have directed your thoughts—as all of you who are acquainted with the vast field of science will perceive—to an expanse crowded with objects, and incapable of measurement. This is outspread before the human mind for investigation; and yet we murmur because we cannot know all things!

Judge of it by human acquisition. There is no one man largely acquainted with all the sciences. No man can success-

fully devote himself to the study of all. Every man who means to know much feels the necessity of confining his attention to one subject. Hence one cultivates physics, another metaphysics, a third mathematics, and a fourth morals; while, under a single department, its thorough investigation demands subdivision—so that in natural history, for example, it is enough for one to devote himself to shells, and another to seaweeds. For no large portion of its discoveries is science indebted to any one investigator. Discovery is an accumulation of contributions from many hands, and has resulted from the intense application of single minds, often through many years, and sometimes for a whole life, to some small portion of the great field of knowledge. And yet how much there is that is not known! Although many inquirers have found their way across the vast expanse, there are yet large regions which show no footprints. There are probably more tracks untrodden than have ever been trod. And how very large a portion of scientific knowledge has been acquired within the last hundred years! Nor is there any reason to conclude that knowledge may not increase, with at least equal rapidity, for ages. And yet, with all this glorious field before them, some will do nothing but vex themselves with a few insoluble problems. We read that Alexander, after carrying his conquests to what then appeared to be the utmost east, complained that he had not another world to conquer; but he did not do so till he had conquered this. Let us be comforted. Assuredly, our knowledge is more to be gloried in for its actual and possible extent, than to be repined at for its wise and necessary limitations.

VI. Lastly, I observe that, with respect to our knowledge, now restricted, we are in a position of brilliant expectation.

Ah! we shall know more hereafter; though not all things, I suppose, even at last. But we are on the eve of a glorious change; glorious in some respects, even for those to whom it may not be a happy one. But a short time, and we shall remove from this world to another—I know not where, but somewhere in the world of spirits, where we shall behold glorious beings, and glorious objects. Change of place will much augment our knowledge; and will make us familiar in a moment with bright, glorious, and terrific things, which we have only heard of now, and which have been matters of impenetrable mystery. While change of place shall teach us



much, change of faculty shall teach us more. Now we see by the eye, and hear by the ear; but the soul, released from the body, shall develop mightier faculties. We shall then, perhaps, be able to take in more knowledge in a moment than we now acquire in a whole life. The dispensation, too, will be changed. This is a dispensation, as I have said, in which God, for probationary purposes, hides things from us, and in which he will have us take things on trust in order that he may test us; but the necessity for concealment will then have passed away. That which we know not now we shall know hereafter. God's veiled dispensation respecting us individually, and respecting the whole world of sin and misery, shall have been consummated, and the veil have been finally withdrawn. Everything shall be illumined by the blaze of that glorious light in which heaven shall rejoice, the light of the glory of God for ever.

O you that want knowledge, can you not have patience for a little while? not even for a moment? Knowledge shall come! Knowledge, not only of the things which you desire to know, but, peradventure, of many things which it may be your desire not to know. Revelation! Discovery! We are upon the verge of it! Even as I speak, the glories of eternity seem to open upon us, and in a moment we may be more than satisfied. Have we no patience for a single instant? Are we so very eager to know all?

Let me, then, ask you solemnly the question, Are you prepared to know all? The discoveries of another world, are you ready for them? Can you greet the new realities with joy? There will be revealed to you a glorious God: will you be able to call him your father and your friend? There will be revealed to you the Saviour who once died for your salvation: will you be able to call him the Saviour of your soul, and your adorable Lord? There will be revealed to you the company of the redeemed, singing praises to him that loved them, and gave himself for them: are you prepared to join in that song, having been made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light? There will be revealed to you an awful hell; the place of darkness, perdition, and despair: will it be the place from which you have timely fled, and secured your escape? Or will it be the place in which, by a conscious fitness, you will discern your doom? Ah! boast not unthinkingly of your desire for knowledge. Press not your



demand for drawing aside the veil of the unseen, if you have no interest in Jesus, no preparation for heaven. Why should you behold as yet what could only fill you with terror and despair?

What, then, is the sum of the whole matter? Some things are "too painful" for you to know, too difficult for you to comprehend; and on this account you are to waste life's precious opportunities in inaction and complaint. Pernicious and destructive fallacy! Avoid it, as the entanglement of the spider's web. Or, if you be in any measure entangled, burst it; it is but a cobweb, and requires only a resolution. Say rather, "I have immediate interests, and I must secure them. I must love Jesus; I must trust in his name; I must be at peace with God; I must live in his service; I must die in his favour."

## THE LOVELINESS OF JESUS.\*

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“Thy name is as ointment poured forth.”—*Canticles* i. 3.

A LARGE part of the beauty of the Bible lies in the multitude and variety of its metaphors. In this respect the book has no parallel. We are far, however, from doing equal justice to this body of noble and glorious metaphors. Some of them, being derived from aspects of nature, speak the same language in all ages, and to all people; they are in all circumstances equally well understood, and equally deeply felt: some of them, on the other hand, derived from customs and usages of society, are not in all ages, and in all countries, equally eloquent; since the usages of society not only differ at the same eras in different countries, but differ in the same countries at different eras. Of this latter class of metaphors is that employed in the text, when it is said that the name of Jesus—for that is the name I speak of—“is as ointment poured forth.”

Now, according to our usages, there is nothing very agreeable in “ointment poured forth.” It is needful for us to recollect, that even the meaning of words in our own language changes, and that by “ointment,” as the word is used in Scripture, we are generally, if not in all cases, to understand perfume. We have in one place a scriptural expression to this effect, “Ointment prepared according to the art of the apothecary,” which intimates to us that perfumes came into use through a medicinal channel; that they were not, in their origin, so distinct as they are now from medicinal preparations. Instead of speaking now of “ointment prepared according to the art of the apothecary,” we have to speak of perfume prepared according to the art of the perfumer. You will recollect the various references to

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the use of perfumery in the Old Testament. "A good name is better than precious ointment." "Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment." Costly perfumes are enumerated among the royal treasures of king Hezekiah. In the New Testament, too, you remember the cases in which an alabaster box of precious ointment—costly perfume, which in one instance cost some six or seven guineas—was opened, and poured upon the person of the blessed Redeemer.

Now in ancient times, beyond doubt, more perfumery was used than is used now: but in Eastern and tropical countries a great deal of perfumery is used yet; and it is used very largely in the form in which some of us may remember our grandfathers using it, namely, in the form of scented pomatum for the head. We now prefer—those who like perfumes at all—a liquid perfume, but even this is not general in English society; so that the metaphor here employed passes away without our enjoyment of it to the extent to which it is intended for illustration. What we need, then, to do, is to quicken our imagination into exercise, and to recollect that there is one of the senses to which perfume is agreeable. The meaning is this; that, as perfume is pleasing to the sense, so the name of Jesus is, or ought to be, fragrant to the heart. The name of Jesus is, or should be, "as ointment poured forth;" and this for three reasons:—

I. ON ACCOUNT OF THE EXCELLENCES OF HIS PERSON.

II. ON ACCOUNT OF THE PERFECTION OF HIS WORK.

III. ON ACCOUNT OF THE ARDOUR OF HIS LOVE. These are the three heads of my discourse.

I. I say, in the first place, that the name of Jesus should be "as ointment poured forth," BECAUSE OF THE EXCELLENCES OF HIS PERSON.

Now there are three points of view in which the person of our Lord Jesus Christ may be regarded.

I. *As man.* Not, as some have held, a phantom, an appearance of man without reality; but man, strictly speaking, just as ourselves in body and in soul—uncontaminated purity excepted, which characterized him only. Well, a man is an object common enough, and very often degraded and hideous enough. In the person of Jesus, however, we see a lovely specimen of our humanity; an eminently amiable, pure, dignified, benevolent man: the sort of man it is a luxury indeed

to look at. But that is not all. You see in the person of the Redeemer a man, not only of extreme rarity, but of absolute singularity. There was, in the age in which he lived, no other such man in existence. There was in this world such a man in existence once, but only once, and only one, and that for a short period—that was our first parent before he sinned; and, from that time till the appearance of Jesus Christ in this world, was there never man in it of whom it could be said, as it was said of him—“in him was no sin.” There was the absolute perfection of human nature appearing again in the midst of a corrupt world, without partaking of its corruption: once more, and but once, and but in one case. A man without sin—with all the lovely attributes of human nature, in the beauty of each, and the combined beauty of the whole. A man, so to speak, to be put into a museum.

2. We view the person of our Lord Jesus Christ not merely as man, but *as God*. As I said he was strictly man, so I say he was really God. Not, as was infelicitously said by a distinguished writer some years ago, “deified humanity.” His humanity was simple humanity, not deified; but his person was also God, simply, strictly, really God—the divine nature; the second person of the divine and ever-glorious Trinity. Now how remarkable a thing is this! We have before us in the person of Jesus Christ, God. In the heavens and the earth, and everywhere around us, we have the work of God; something that God has made indirectly expressive of himself; but here stands the only and unique being of whom it can be said, he is God. He is isolated, therefore, by a vast and infinite distance, from every other being or object in the universe. He presents God to us in a truly marvellous aspect. Generally speaking, God is conceived of by us—to whatever extent we can conceive of him—as a being infinite, filling all things, having no limited, because he has a universal, presence: but here God is reduced from the infinite to the finite, to a limited presence and a local residence; so as God was never seen before, nor shall be again. Our conceptions of God are made indefinite, often to a painful degree, by the intangible vastness which we are obliged to endeavour to attach to his character. We feel the want of some medium of perception adapted to the realization of his being. He cannot be seen, he cannot be handled,

he cannot be traced in visible action; but in Jesus Christ God is withdrawn from these impediments to our apprehension of him. There is God as he can be seen; God, in his benign and glorious attributes, appearing in the human countenance, appreciable to our own eye. There is God as he can be heard, uttering his inmost thoughts in the sounds and tones of our own language; God, as it were, translated for us into a tongue that we can read. There is God in action, so that we can trace him: see him raise the dead, command the storm, feed the hungry, open the eyes of the blind. God, verily, as God never was seen before in this world, never but that once, in the man Christ Jesus.

3. We regard the person of our Saviour as presenting to us, not only in one aspect man and in another God, but as presenting to us these two natures, or elements, in combination. Jesus Christ is *God and man in one person*. Not the two natures divided, so that each might act separately, or one at a time; but the two natures blended, so that they are fitted to act together in unison. I do not know, and I do not pretend to know, how to explain this matter; but my firm belief is, according to the Scripture as I believe and understand it, that, as truly as the body and soul form one person in man, so truly the divine nature and the human nature form one person in Immanuel.

Now mark what we have here: God and man in one person, the human and the divine with one consciousness, with one memory, with one feeling; thinking together, feeling together, uttering their common thoughts by a common vehicle. O the thought that is common to the heart of man and to the heart of God; the two natures in unison, so strange, so beautiful! Verily the name of Jesus should be "as ointment poured forth." "He is the chief among ten thousand; the altogether lovely." Here is man in intimate connexion with the Deity, and yet human nature is unconsumed; here is God blended with the feeble nature of man, and yet the divine nature is undegraded.

II. I said that the name of Jesus should be "as ointment poured forth," ON ACCOUNT OF THE PERFECTION OF HIS WORK.

Now there are three aspects in which the work of our Lord Jesus Christ may be regarded. I look at it—

1. *As a work of mediation.* I see God and man severed



by a vast chasm. Once united, when both were holy; but widely separated since men have become corrupt, and God retains his purity. The corruption of man is such, and such the purity of God, that there can be on his part, consistently with his purity, no gracious communication with man of a direct kind. If there be a mediator found, one who can worthily and successfully stand between them, and lay his hand upon them both, then might kindly intercourse be possible, but not otherwise. But who is this mediator to be? How can there be found one that shall possess all the qualifications necessary for the performance of such a function? Where, for example, shall he be found who is capable of speaking for God to man? To speak for God, he must be able to comprehend all God's thoughts, to know them so as, in communicating them, to do to them no injustice; and this requires a mind as large as God's. He must also be able to communicate God's thoughts, and to put their full and correct import into modes and words appreciable and comprehensible by man. Or who shall be worthy and fit to speak for man to God? Who is of such a nature as to give warranty of sympathizing fully with man's condition of ruin, condemnation, and despair, qualified to utter words fitly pleading for such misery and crime: and yet of dignity enough to appear before God, and be fitly there the representative of human nature, whom God shall regard as honourable enough to listen to, and accept? Ah! my brethren, if we want a mediator between God and man, some one to speak for God to us and for us to God, where, where shall he be found? Where but in Jesus, whose person qualifies him in every respect for the undertaking; who, as divine, is partaker of all the sentiments of his Father, and, as human, transfers them without injury into the language of mankind: who, as human, can speak as a brother for his brethren; and, as divine, can speak as a divinity to his fellow? The name of Jesus "is as ointment poured forth." I look on the work of Christ—

2. In the second place, *as a work of expiation for sin.* I spoke just now of the holiness of God keeping the corrupt world at a distance; I speak now of the righteousness of God laying an ungodly world under condemnation. The inflexible righteousness of God, as governor of the world, necessitates the execution of the righteous law, which is holy, just, and

good, though in the execution of it every soul should perish. Neither does the righteousness of God permit any redemption or release from the sentence of condemnation, apart from some sacrifice for sin available to maintain the honour of God's law, while the sinner shall be released from its curse. We want, then, an offering; but where shall we find one? The question which Isaac put to his father in relation to a similar matter is applicable here. "Behold the fire and the wood, my father; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" Ah! where is the lamb for a burnt-offering for our transgression? See the qualifications the sacrifice must possess.

(1). In the first place, as a sacrifice for man, he must be a man. The nature that is offered in expiation must be the same nature as that which has rebelled.

(2). In the second place, as an offering of expiation for sin, he must be a pure and holy man, having no sin of his own. The contaminated could never be accepted in sacrifice for the contaminated.

(3). In the third place, he must not only be a man, and a holy man, but more than a man; since, if the sacrifice were simply human, one life would go for one, and for one only. If the sacrifice had been man only, he could have saved by his death but one man; and there would have been needed as many saviours as there are sinners. We want more than a man—something about him that shall give him more dignity than any one of his fellows; a man of preciousness enough, if such can be found, that it shall be said of him that his life is an equivalent for the life of mankind. And where are you to find this? Of men you may have plenty, but sinful men. Or, if you were to find a holy man, then he is but the equivalent of one transgressor. It is in Jesus alone that these indispensable qualifications are found. There is the "lamb for the burnt-offering," with all you want in him. You want a man for sacrifice. Jesus is your brother, and has the same nature to offer as that in which the rebellion has been perpetrated. You want a holy man. This is he "in whom was no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." You want a man of more dignity than man possesses. Again this is he—a human being with whom the divine nature is so blended and identified, that all he does and all he suffers has a value, not only equivalent to the whole race of man, but to as many worlds, if it were pos-

sible, as there are individuals of our race. My brethren, the divinity of Jesus Christ gives to his obedience unto death a value that is infinite. His "name is as ointment poured forth."

3. In the third place, I look on the work of our Lord and Saviour as a work of living love and saving power. Having yielded up his life and regained it, "death hath no more dominion over him." Raised from the dead, he ascended up on high, and took his seat on his Father's throne; and there he is to carry out actively the work of redemption, in a mode in which none but himself could effect it. Suppose, for example, to test this matter, any other were placed there. What is it that you want in him to whom all power shall be intrusted for the salvation of his church, and for the execution of the Father's purposes? You want, first of all, some one that can understand him, that can know what the plans are that are meant to be fulfilled, and the mode by which they are to be fulfilled. You want not only some one that can know God's mind, but some one also that can know man's mind—the good man's mind, the bad man's mind, and the devil's mind; and all the elements that are brought into play in these marvellous proceedings. You want some one that can understand all, and that can know how to take such measures, and form such apprehensions of things, as to prepare himself for the last judgment, and one who shall know how to judge when the day of judgment comes. Then you want some one that can do it, as well as understand it—some one that has wisdom enough, and power enough, to carry out what he comprehends to be done. And, thirdly, you want some one that has love and compassion enough to do it, and so to identify himself with this poor miserable world as to reckon its redemption the great object for which he lives and labours; to be always about it, and to live for nothing else; to be incessantly carrying on this work with the guilty, the obstinate, the rebellious, the infirm, the sorrowful, the tempted, the tried, so that he has nought to do but to be the comforter of the mourners, the strength of the helpless, the refuge of the weak, and the victor for the feeble. You want one with knowledge, wisdom, power, love, enough for that. Ah! where do you find him, but in Jesus? The capacity and the qualifications of all besides sink into nothing. I would not believe an angel, if he told me that

he understood the eternal plans; I would not believe an angel, if he said he had pity enough, or power enough, to conduct me to heaven. I can believe Jesus. I trust I do believe him. O yes! for that eternal wisdom, that divine knowledge, that infinite understanding, that almighty power, and that deathless love, which lived even in the death on Calvary, and still lives and glows in heaven, I can trust thee, my Saviour! Thy "name is as ointment poured forth."

III. Thirdly, I said that the name of Jesus should be as ointment poured forth, ON ACCOUNT OF THE ARDOUR OF HIS LOVE.

And this is the hardest of all the three parts of my discourse. Not that it is not pleasant to speak of the love of Christ, and it ought to be easy to expatiate upon it; but it is so hard to do justice to it. It has very often seemed to me a marvellous thing, and utterly inexplicable, how Jesus Christ ever loved sinners at all. For, although it is very easy for us to have an idea, since we have ourselves the sentiment of compassion, how the poor, and miserable, and undone, may excite pity, yet with us there is this law, that the excitement of pity is always obstructed by our observation of criminality. We pity distress readily, and, in cases where we find the distress is not the result of crime or folly, our pity flows in its broadest and most copious stream; but, if we find distress which has been brought on by culpable means—for example, the distress which men bring on themselves by habits of drunkenness; the distress which men bring on themselves by embezzlement, or by fraud; the distress which men bring on themselves by the commission of a greater crime, such as murder—in proportion to our abhorrence of the crime is the diminution of our pity. We come to say—"Ah! you have deserved it; I have little pity for you;" till at last, I take it, we may come to say in such cases—"I see you are miserable, but I have no pity; your conduct has been so bad." O, my friends! suppose Christ had proceeded in relation to his pity according to the law of our own nature, and that his love had been repressed by his observation of our guilt! Why, he had to see in us a greater culpability than ever we have seen in others. I talked about embezzlement, and fraud, and even greater crimes; but our criminality towards God far transcends all this. Our aliena-



tion, and enmity, and disobedience, must present us to Jesus Christ in an aspect necessitating his most intense abhorrence; and yet he pitied us. O! he is not made like man. I do not believe that ever man could have pitied in such a case; I do not believe that ever angels could have pitied in such a case. Such love is a property which is altogether divine, that passes over what is adapted to excite abhorrence, and pities notwithstanding all.

And then, as to the degree in which our blessed Saviour has loved. O! I confess I am at an utter loss here. I would gladly vacate this place, and put any one of you into it. I would make you all preachers, and ask you questions, and bid you speak to me, and help me to explain a theme so untractable. How much he loved? Why, tell me, then, how high the glory was from whence he came; tell me how felicitous the place in his Father's bosom was which he left for us; tell me how sweet those songs, and how rich those glories, were, which for us he abandoned when he came down to this world. I cannot tell how much he loved until I know these things. How much he loved? Tell me, then, how far he humbled himself when he took our nature upon him. Tell me how much he suffered in a world of guilt and shame like this. Tell me how great the ignominy was beneath which he died, and how deep the anguish of his soul when he exclaimed—"My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Those words ring in one's ears with a terrible import, like thunder, which, as you listen to it, utters a voice which you revere, but do not understand. My brethren, the love of Jesus passeth knowledge. To tell you that he lived and was beneficent, that he died and was patient, is to utter words which, in relation to such a theme, seem to have no justice. They are too poor. I bid each of you conceive for yourselves how much Jesus loved. Verily, his name should be "as ointment poured forth."

And now, dear friends, for the conclusion of these few thoughts. I have said that the name of Jesus *should be* "as ointment poured forth." I now desire, in the first place, to make an inquiry of a practical kind, and to put the question to you who hear me. Is the name of Jesus "as ointment poured forth" to you? Is it fragrant to your hearts, dear hearers? Ah! I fear that this question divides you. I fear that there are two classes in relation to this matter. There



are some of you who must say—"Why, no; the name of Jesus has no fragrance for me. I use it sometimes—sometimes profanely; sometimes lightly; but I do not think it is fragrant to me; I know many names that are more so." Ah! you do. Their name is Legion, I take it,—vanity, pleasure, wealth, ambition. These names are more fragrant to you, perhaps, than the name of Jesus. Ah! what a mistaken judgment you have formed! Have you, then, no need of a Saviour, no sin to be forgiven, no soul to be saved, no hell to flee from, no heaven to win, that you find no fragrance in the name of Jesus? There is no other Saviour; no other name is given under heaven whereby you can be saved. Are you bent on perishing? Will you have nothing he has to give? You would not turn away rudely from a man that offered you a sovereign; some of you, perhaps, not from a man that offered you a sixpence; and you can turn away from Jesus, who presents to you salvation, as though he offered you nothing worthy of your acceptance. Oh! this is dreadful trifling! It is an awful thing to live in a dying world in a state like this. It is a dreadful thing to stand on the brink of eternity without an interest in Christ. You labour for the meat that perisheth; but labour not for the meat that perisheth, nor do another stroke of this world's toil, till you have taken hold of Jesus as your Saviour. You lie down on your bed, and sleep; but sleep not a wink on the brink of the grave, on the brink of hell, till you have embraced Jesus as your Saviour. You go to places of pleasure; but smile no more, and take no more pleasure, with damnation near at hand, or while you refuse an interest in him who alone can redeem you from its pains.

There are many of you, dear brethren, with whom I know well that the name of Jesus is "as ointment poured forth." Ah! you have learned to love him—the friend that gave himself for you, and drew your hearts to him, and hath in so many, many, instances fulfilled the great and precious promise which he sealed with his blood. How many times have you found his name

"A balm for every wound,  
A cordial for your fears"!

And it has not grown stale yet. No! you will rejoice to travel in the midst of this perfume all the way to heaven.

O! let it never vanish from you; be never far from the fountain of it. Live near to Jesus; and mistrust him not. Weep no tears of bitterness and despair. No! the name of Jesus is too full of consolation. Let it ever rejoice your souls. He is the Saviour whom you never have found disappoint you, and whom you will not surely recompense for his faithfulness with mistrust.

O, my brethren! there is something in these thoughts that entertain us to-day, not only fitted for our passage through all the various paths of this guilty, trying, world, but something in them that blends heaven and earth together. The name of Jesus is a name above every name that is named, whether in earth or in heaven. That same name which is fragrant for us, is "as ointment poured forth" among the seraphim of God. O the familiar fragrance that shall make us feel at home in heaven! The fragrance of that name shall make us rejoice in the world above, conscious that it is the same as that which has cheered us in the world below. Blessed Jesus! how shall we thank thee for making thy name, once so disregarded, fragrant to our hearts? Teach us to love thee amidst all earth's changes, and prepare us to spend with thee a happy immortality!

## THE GOSPEL THE POWER OF GOD.\*

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"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us who are saved it is the power of God."—1 *Corinthians* i. 18.

THERE is something very interesting—I might almost say striking—in the first phrase presented to us by this verse—"the preaching of the cross." By "the preaching of the cross," of course, we understand the preaching of the Gospel, —a phrase, indeed, which the apostle uses synonymously with it in the preceding verse. And there must be some reason why this, which is not the direct phrase, is used to denote the preaching of the Gospel; that is, some reason why the preaching of the Gospel may be called also "the preaching of the cross." There are two circumstances which may have led to the use of this name.

First, the apostle did not so preach the Gospel as to conceal the cross. Ecclesiastical history presents to us cases in which this has been done. It is upon record that some of the Roman Catholic missionaries that went out to China and the East did preach the Gospel concealing the cross—holding back the fact that Jesus the great Saviour had died in ignominy upon the cross, and telling their hearers only of those facts concerning him which had a glorious appearance, such as his resurrection and ascension. And it might not have been altogether unnatural that the first disciples should have sympathized in such a feeling, and have gone about the world telling rather that Christ had risen than that he had died,—telling rather of his ascension to the right hand of God than of his execution as a criminal under Pontius Pilate. This fact, as it was very humiliating, and had a character of ignominy and disgrace, so it tended to attach dishonour to his name, and to the Gospel of salvation which was

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\* Preached at Devonshire Square Chapel, London, March 7th, 1852.

preached in his name. But the apostles did not do so. With them the preaching of the Gospel was the preaching of the cross: they told the whole story, and gave as full and detailed an account of the Saviour's death, and the reproaches that fell upon his name, as they did of his resurrection and ascension into heaven, and the power that he exercised there. So distinct was this that their preaching of the Gospel might with justice be called "the preaching of the cross."

Secondly, there is another reason which justifies the use of this phrase: the crucifixion of Christ supplied, and was the origin of, the great and influential topics which their preaching of the Gospel contained. It would have been nothing for Paul to have preached the resurrection of Christ—the ascension of Christ—the glory of Christ in heaven, if he had not preached his death. These facts, glorious as they are, have no evangelical glory or meaning if you separate them from the cross. To say that Christ rose from the grave, and ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father, and maintains perpetual dominion there, is to state glorious facts; but hide the circumstances of his atoning death—pass it over—let it not be told—and there is nothing in all the rest. Take away the cross, and you take away the very life and soul of the Gospel itself. So the preaching of the Gospel was "the preaching of the cross." From the most ignominious part of it they drew the whole power of the Gospel they preached.

And likely enough it was, that, going about the world and preaching such a Gospel, they should find many people who would reckon it "foolishness." Viewed according to the current notions then prevalent in the world, it was a foolish thing to preach such a Gospel as that. As far as the world was Jewish, and leavened with Judaic notions, the people were everywhere expecting something great—pomp, power, splendour. To preach to them a Gospel of the "cross"—to tell them of a man who was crucified with thieves, who was buffeted, and scourged, and spit upon—that did not correspond with their ideas at all. They thought it "foolishness." And as far as the world was pagan, and leavened with the notions of pagan philosophy, men were intent on the pursuit of speculation. They wanted to settle the question of the nature of virtue—of the sublime—of the false—of the true—and many other points that Paul did not

want to settle at all. Paul taught them practical matters of eternal moment, which were "foolishness" to them. The simple doctrine he promulgated could not resolve any of their philosophical problems. A great many people, also, cast it aside from a general obduracy and unconcern of heart. A likely issue enough; but, thanks to God, not the only issue. There were some to whom it was "the power of God;" some who were saved by it. To them, and in their judgment, it was a powerful thing. They had felt it such, and experience was a good proof in that matter. They found it a thing divinely powerful, having such power as never was found in any contrivance of man since the world was: a power worthy of God, such as might be fitting and honourable for God himself to exercise upon the heart and character of man; a power indicating the Gospel message to be not less than divine.

We come, then, to a general idea on which I mean to enlarge a little, namely, that the Gospel is a power—an instrument adapted to be of great influence on the heart of man. God's scheme of salvation by Jesus Christ has an efficacy with respect to his own system, and as it regards the procedure of his own administration; but it is to have an effect, also, upon the heart and character of man. The preaching of the Gospel is the mode in which this power is to be applied to the hearts and consciences of mankind.

I beg here to make a passing remark upon two somewhat prevailing general aspects of theology as now current amongst us. They are found occasionally in sermons and treatises, and I think it not unfit to take a brief notice of them here. It is the custom with some divines to bring forward the notion that the Gospel, as a power to work a change on the heart and character of man, derives its force, not so much from the death of Christ, as from his life. If you have an open ear and an observant mind, you will find this idea set forth; and that we ought to preach, not only his death, but even more emphatically his life. God, we are told, has embodied the doctrines of Christianity more in the life of Christ than in his death. These divines, as though timid and fearful of the influence which might be diffused by preaching the *death* of Christ, continually urge us to preach his *life*. How benignly, how virtuously, how heroically, how devoutly, he lived! Now I do not mean to say one word in depreciation



of the life of Christ, which was pre-eminently benign, virtuous, heroic, and devout; superlatively grand and striking was it in all respects: but I have no faith whatever in the moral influence of the life of Christ, as compared with the moral influence of his death. It was a life of virtue, but I do not believe that the presenting to the world a life of virtue is likely to be in any degree influential in its regeneration. It may be said that the life of Christ presents to us the benignity of God, but this is done far more touchingly in his death. To my mind, it is the death of Christ that contains the moral influence of the Gospel by which man's heart is to be renewed. What Paul preached was not Christ's life, but Christ's death. I think it is because men are becoming weary of the cross of Christ a great deal too soon, that they are preaching the life of Christ. Glorious that is, and in its place useful; but that it was ever meant to contain the great persuasives of the Gospel to the heart of man I do not believe.

Again, some men tell us that the Gospel is a power, and that the death of Christ may have an influence, but that it is not an atonement. What is it then? It is a "way of speaking!" And all that we are told about an atonement for sin is just a "way of speaking!" which God meant to be persuasive and influential to men's hearts, but which has no reality in it. To this I would say, first, if God tells us about things as if there were an atonement and there really is none, that is not sincerity, or truth. I cannot impute such a thing to God, my Maker! If he tells us about an atonement for sin, it is because there is one. How any divines can cast such an imputation on God's veracity, I cannot understand. Secondly, unless the atonement be a fact it cannot be a power. All the influence that can be exerted on the heart of man by saying there is an atonement, arises from the fact of that atonement. If I find that what is said about the atonement is not true, then there is no longer any power in anything that can be said about it. If it is a fiction, it is, at least, a most unfortunate thing that these divines have found it to be a fiction. It being now discovered that it is all a deception, there can no longer be any persuasive power in whatever may be said concerning it, as there never can be in a thing that has no existence. How good people can lend themselves to such a mode of representing

the Gospel, is again a thing that I find it very difficult to understand. For my own part I lay down the position that the Gospel is a power because it proclaims an atonement.

Now, passing from the consideration of these two views, I take up the general idea that the Gospel is a power: it presents a set of topics and considerations intended, and adapted, to move and work upon men's hearts and consciences.

I. If the atoning death of Christ be a fact, what a fact must sin itself be! Here is God making a vast provision, by the humiliating and agonizing death of his own Son, for the expiation of the sin of the world. What a proof it is of the lost state of man! Would God, the wise, the holy, the gracious, have made such a provision for expiating our sin if we were not sinners—if we were not great sinners? Is there not, then, a deep culpability and criminality in our life and conduct? You tell me it is hard to convince you of sin: you tell me you have done nothing so very wrong, nothing to call for damnation. You think it hard—incredible. See there! there we have God providing an expiation for your sin by the incarnation and blood-shedding of his Son! And yet you say you cannot see that you are a sinner. If you are not a sinner, what is God's conduct in this matter? Your belief that you are not a sinner throws back on God's wisdom an aspersion of error. Will you quarrel with your Maker in this way? Will you not see in the death of Christ a fact heart-melting, soul-subduing, and say, "Well, then, I am a sinner. If my iniquities have deserved this, and caused the appointment of such a way of salvation, let me bow down heart-broken, and confess my sins."

II. If it be a fact that Christ's death is an atonement for sin, then what a fact is God's justice! The sinner says, "True, I have sinned, but I do not apprehend condemnation, because God is merciful and loving." Well, now, come again with me to the cross of Christ. See a dying Saviour! There is God arousing his vengeance against his own Son when he stood as man's representative. There is no sinner in this world that has half the reason to plead why he should escape God's justice, that Jesus Christ had. Christ might say, "Father, I have not sinned, thou needest not chastise *me*." He said not a word, and the Father would not have listened to a word if he had. And now, sinner, do you think for a

moment, that, when the same question comes to be asked whether the sword of justice shall smite you, the hand of God will hold it back, when he did not hesitate to smite his Son?

III. If it be a fact that the death of Christ is an atonement for sin, how great a fact is the love of God to a rebellious world. I have just now been speaking of the wrath of God; and the terrors of his justice, as seen in the execution of his wrath against sin upon the person of his Son, may well strike us with awe. You think him, perhaps, not only an angry, but a malignant being. You think his wrath argues unkindness, and you entertain hard thoughts of him. You dread to approach him. You resent his anger against sin, and harden your heart against him. Go, then, again to Calvary; and there you see the most rigorous exercise of a Judge's righteousness amidst the meltings of a Father's heart. See to what an expense he has gone to save you. See what an effort he has made, by the sacrifice of his Son, that he might not punish you. And are you going to fly from *him* as a being wrathful and malign, who stands there slaying his own Son for your welfare, and offering him up there rather than abandon you to perdition? Come, sinner; is there no reconciling power here? Is it altogether vain that God hath appeared in Christ Jesus reconciling the world to himself? Hath not the cross a power in it, when there seems to issue from the expiring figure of the Son of God this entreaty, "Be ye reconciled to God"? Are you going still to be his enemy? Have you no conscience, telling you with a power you cannot resist that he deserves you should be his friend.

IV. If it be a fact that the death of Christ was an atonement for sin, what a fact is the foundation of a sinner's hope. O! then, it is true, and true enough, that none need despair; and it is true, and true enough, that whosoever believeth in him shall be saved. And there is no fallacy in it, when a poor guilty sinner, who yields himself up helpless and undone into the hands of Jesus, and there finds a plenitude of pardon, breathes peace, and begins to rejoice: nothing unjust, nothing unreasonable, when I send my fears away, and say, "Jesus is mine, and God is my Father through him." Presumptuous if there were no atonement, but well founded if Jesus died for my sin, and was raised again for my justifica-

tion. ¶ Then my guilty conscience may be at peace; my troubled heart may be quiet in hope; my spring of joy bursts forth: I put my trust in him, and "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him." I want a great Saviour, it is true, but a greater Saviour than Jesus I do not want.

"In him my vast desires are filled,  
And all my powers rejoice."

V. If it be a fact that the death of Christ was an atonement, what a fact is a believer's obligation to devotedness and love. Ah! my brethren, if we have been bought at such a price we are no more our own. Whose, then, are we now? The purchaser's! He that paid his blood for our ransom, it is his we are now: his by right of purchase—his by surrender, not unwilling, on our own part. O! have we yielded ourselves to Jesus, and found salvation in him, and yet are we unconscious of this obligation? Are we saying, "Yes, I will have pardon—I will have security—I will have peace: but I will love the world, I will cherish slothfulness, I will idolize the creature." Now, my brethren, if this be the case; if these longings and cries of the old man are not silenced, let us come to Calvary. There is the power. See there at what cost we have been redeemed—with what agony—by what love? And he that so loved us, and died for our sins, says now, "All that I ask is that you love me." "Love thee, blessed Saviour! How can I help it? I must love thee for ever." Hear him again:—"All that I ask is that you will hate the sins that slew me." "Hate the sins that slew thee, blessed Saviour! Do not I hate them with a perfect hatred?"

"While, with a bleeding, broken heart,  
My murdered Lord I view,  
I raise revenge against my sins,  
And slay the murderers too."

"All that I now ask is that you will live to me, promote my glory, and endeavour to give me a good name in the world." And what is your answer to that? "O blessed One! if it be in my power, by look, or life, or word, or influence, to promote thy praise, there is no object in the world I would so gladly live for! What can give me an equal joy?" Is not that your language when you look to the cross?



Does it not bring out of your heart's depths these exclamations? And for the old man, that says, "No, I yield to sin, I cherish self-love, and indulge in carnal gratification:" you say, "Avast! be quiet! I will break, not only thy head, but thy very heart; and here at the cross must thou die, and cease thy utterances for ever!"

VI. If the death of Christ be in fact an atonement for sin, what a fact is the guarantee of a believer's happiness! How unquestionable the love of God must be to them that trust him, seeing he gave his Son for them that hated him. For a rebellious and wicked world he gave his Son. Such was the depth of his compassion for them: and for his disciples—his followers—what will he do for them? be unkind to them? leave them in trouble?—forsake them in temptation? No, no! Never! He would give his Son a second time for them, if necessary. This he would do: much more will he exercise that kind and continual care for the maintenance of which he was raised to the throne, and sits at the right hand of God "He that spared not his own Son, how will he not with him freely give us all things?"

I will now conclude with one or two practical observations on this fact, that the Gospel is a power, and presents a set of topics and considerations appealing touchingly to the heart.

1. How wonderful it is that God should be pleased thus to deal with men. Here is God bent on reconciling the world to himself: he wishes to have a change wrought upon the human heart and character, and he condescends to the employment of this moral power; submitting, as it were, to his own law, according to which he has established an influence on men's minds. "I have made man susceptible of emotion; and I will appeal to him by fear, by love, by all ways to which his heart is open. I will treat it according to what I have made it." It is God using his own machinery, subjecting himself to the action of his own law, coming out to persuade a world, and using means and motives of persuasion with his creatures. Is not that a marvellous thing? O! one expects to see God pursuing his course in a way of dignity and power. He that rolls the stars along, and holds the planets in their course, condescends to entreat a man, presenting himself before him in a mode and aspect of reason, adducing considerations to weigh with him, inviting decision, begging that he will weigh every appeal! God so



humiliating himself as to suffer himself to be refused and neglected! Marvellous attitude for God, but an attitude assumed in his wisdom! That there is a dignity and glory in it cannot be doubted.

2. What a thought it is for ungodly men that there is a divine power in the Gospel, and that in it God puts forth all his power of persuasion. It is God's opinion, God's estimate, then, that in this aspect of the death of Christ there is something adapted—exquisitely adapted—gloriously adapted, to convince man's understanding, to transform his heart. That is the end for which God presents it. It is a power designed with divine wisdom and equity for this work, an all-sufficient power, and leaving all the culpability with the rejector of it. Now, sinner, what a thought is this for you! "Here is God dealing with me by motives which he has devised; motives which, in his judgment, are convincing and powerful, and which will, if I give consideration to them, transform my heart. I am dealt with, therefore, in such a way that, if I reject and repel his offers, it puts him in the right and myself in the wrong." Under what obligation this places you to take up these topics, and to bring them home! You, who are so treated by God, and see so clearly the means he has employed for your good; why do you not take them up, spare yourself no pains in thoroughly examining them, and never satisfy yourself until you can with confidence say:—"Now I have pondered the considerations of the Gospel, I have thought over the motives brought to enforce its claims, and I see no just reason why I should repent, and turn to God." If you can say that, you are ready for judgment. But, if you cannot, then you must say:—"I must soon die, and there is a crucified Saviour whose face I dare not see, and an angry God whose frown I cannot bear." How can you dare to live in such a state as this—self-condemned now, and more deeply self-condemned at last?

3. And, my brethren, it is for us to remember that the Gospel is a power—"the power of God." You know that, in the course of the Christian life, we all want a great deal of power; that is, we want our devout affections renewed and invigorated. We want something to make us more dead to sin, and alive to holiness. We have, I trust, felt it in part. It was this—the contemplation of the love of Christ in dying for us—that melted our hearts once. Live near to

Christ, realize his love for you in his death on the cross. There is the source of perpetual energy for the spiritual life. In this world you must often feel the pressure of earthly things—the allurements of carnality, of self-love, of worldliness. The two influences are antagonistic: here is the corresponding influence of Christ and his cross. And, as to the instrumentality for the nourishing of our holy affections, it is simply a realization of what Christ has done for us. Yet you are despondent, ready to despair! You must come to the cross, and gaze anew. Say you are worldly—say that sin gains upon you—say that temptation still has power. See there a love which overcomes these influences, and gives you renewed strength to grapple with them. This is the secret of spiritual vigour; and, in all cases in which you make the attempt, I am sure you will find it so. I have, I hope, been a Christian for forty years. I have found, as you all find, the outbreaks of sin, and the encroachments of the world; yet this resource has ever inspired me with the feeling of hope, and with spiritual strength: and I charge you all with the experiment, being persuaded that there is no malady which the Christian may not heal, if he will come near to Christ, and gaze on his cross. At that sight corruption withers, while the heart takes a fresh hold, and yields itself anew in devotedness to Jesus. There it says: “Sin, my heart is not for thee: it is for thee, Saviour, thy service, thy ways!” Come, then, dear brethren, and strive to-day to realize the truth:—“The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth.”

## ON PREACHING.\*

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“For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”—1 *Corinthians* i. 21.

WITHOUT disparaging its cognate activities, it may be laid down, I suppose, with universal assent, that preaching is the great labour of the missionary enterprise; a labour to which Christian schools, the circulation of tracts, the translation of the Scriptures, and even the formation and care of churches, however important, are but auxiliary. The passage before us, therefore, has an immediate interest in relation to the object of our present assembling, since preaching is the subject of it; and a brief consideration of the topics it presents to us may, under the divine blessing, be conducive to our edification. “After that,” says the apostle, “in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”

Our subject being preaching, it is important that, in the outset, the true idea of preaching should be ascertained.

It might seem, indeed, that a practice of such frequent and familiar occurrence could scarcely need to be defined; and yet the practice may be found to have departed so far from the original design, as to render a recurrence to it neither useless nor unnecessary. In truth, there are two things which preaching is commonly supposed to be, which we are inclined to say it is not. On the one hand, preaching is not an ecclesiastical act, presupposing office; neither, on the other, is it a formal act, implying order. Both these views are, as is well known, extensively held. It is tenaciously maintained by some that to preach is a clerical

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prerogative, which no layman has a right to assume, or can properly exercise ; while by others it is supposed that the act of preaching must constitute a portion of a regular service, a more familiar address amounting only to a few words of exhortation. We repudiate equally both these notions. Throwing aside the conventional meanings which ages of ecclesiastical usage have generated, and reverting to the sole authority in matters of this class, the import of the scriptural term, we shall be led to a widely different idea.

The original preacher, *κήρυξ*, was a herald, charged with negotiation, or a common crier—a public officer, whose business it was to proclaim, or to make publicly known, matters which he had in commission. Thus to preach, *κηρύσσειν*, was either to negotiate or to make proclamation. From this latter use of the term was gradually derived a meaning of congruous, but reduced, import—to announce, or orally to diffuse intelligence. In its sacred association, to preach is orally to disseminate religious knowledge, whether with or without a clerical office, whether in a formal or a familiar manner, whether in public or in private channels, whether to groups or to individuals. Preaching, in a word, is a name for any oral mode of making known evangelical truth ; and, as descriptive of a divine institution, it denotes an appointed service of religious instruction.

Having thus ascertained the true idea of preaching, and carefully keeping it before us, let us proceed to such observations concerning it as the words of the apostle suggest.

I. Our first observation is, that preaching was not from the beginning ; that is to say, not immediately consequent on the sin and ruin of mankind. It did not please God to institute it until “after” a certain portion of the world’s history had transpired.

Not that at any time the actual business of the world’s religious instruction had been neglected by its Maker. Never had God left himself “without witness.” From the beginning, and through every age, the heavens had declared his glory, and the firmament had shown his handiwork ; day unto day had uttered speech, and night unto night had taught knowledge ; while he had never ceased to manifest his bounty by giving rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling men’s hearts with food and gladness.

In addition to these external testimonies, God had placed

within man's bosom a living witness to his claims, whose voice, faithful according to its light, spoke to every man intelligibly, and, perhaps, to many men powerfully, of duty and of sin, of obligation and of judgment.

Nor had the great facts of redeeming mercy, which have since become the burden of the preacher's tongue, been altogether withheld from the earliest generations. Scarcely had the enemy of man accomplished his first and most fatal triumph, when gracious announcement was made of a deliverer, the seed of the woman, who, with a bruised heel, should crush the serpent's head ; while the institution of the rite of sanguinary sacrifice, strikingly significant by anticipation of the great atonement, threw the prophetic announcement into a substantive embodiment, which has been preserved by all nations as a perpetual monument of it, although the terms in which it was proclaimed may have been forgotten.

Such elements of divine knowledge had existed in the world from the beginning, and they were not entirely lost even in its deepest ignorance. If they were not like the day-creating sun, shedding its broad and ample light, they were at least like stars, which relieved in some degree the otherwise unmitigated blackness of the heaven above, and furnished a feeble, but not utterly worthless, guidance to travellers else totally bewildered. Preaching, however, was not from the beginning. The lessons in the knowledge of himself which God was pleased to vouchsafe to the early ages of mankind, were communicated directly by his own hand, or by his own voice, and were conveyed alike to all. Either they were written on the broad and varied expanse of the earth and sky, which all alike beheld ; or they were breathed by the inward monitor, to whose whispers all alike listened ; or they were couched in a significant action, which all alike witnessed. There was then instituted no service of religious instruction as between man and his fellows. For this (for the system was not altered, either by the occasional appearance of prophets, or by the local operation of Judaism) the world had to wait four thousand years.

II. Our second observation is, that the period antecedent to the institution of preaching was one of deplorable darkness. During its whole progress, "the world by wisdom knew not God."



1. The world, indeed, according to the language of the apostle, had its "wisdom." It was not, however, that the earliest fathers of mankind applied themselves immediately to the cultivation of their intellectual powers. They seem in the first instance to have made experiment of their physical strength, the most obvious of the faculties with which their Maker had endowed them. The first transaction on record is a murder, and the single phrase by which the state of the world after fifteen hundred years is described by the inspired penman is this—"the earth was filled with violence" (Gen. vi. 11). Such was the mutually destructive character of our race in its first development, that God repented of its creation, and, with the exception of one vital germ, swept it from the earth by a deluge.

After the flood men appear to have given themselves with one consent to the indulgence of the sensual passions, and to have rushed wildly into idolatry, the practice of which, while taking innumerable forms, was in every form debasing and polluting.

At length, however, the observer of human progress is cheered by the birth of philosophy, and he sees in various nations noble-minded men applying themselves, with a success not unworthy of admiration considering the circumstances in which it was achieved, to the study and diffusion of both physical, intellectual, and moral, science. In the east and the west, in India and Persia, in Egypt and Greece, arose men whose names, and in some cases their works, are come down with honour to our own times, and whose writings afford lights to modern, as their words constituted them the founders of the ancient, schools. In instances not a few, the revered instructors of their own era have transmitted to posterity a title to reverence scarcely less profound from the latest ages of mankind.

2. Yes, the world had its wisdom ; but the wisdom of the world was not sufficient for its welfare. Its defective result the apostle sums up in one pregnant phrase ; by it the world "knew not God."

It might seem as though the condition indicated by this phrase was one of ignorance merely, but more is undoubtedly intended. There was a moral fault, of which ignorance was rather the effect than the cause. Men did not avail themselves of the means of knowing God which were in their

possession. "For the invisible things of him, even his eternal power and godhead, from the creation of the world were clearly discernible: so that they were without excuse; because when they knew God"—or might have known him—"they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful." Thus, "that which may be known of God was manifest to them, for God had showed it unto them;" and upon this ground the charge is brought against the population of the ancient world, that they "held the truth in unrighteousness;" that, for the sake of indulging in vices which even the dim light they had rebuked, they turned their eyes away from its manifestations.

Assuredly it was at once natural and just that, wishing to be ignorant, men should become so. They "became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools; and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things." They "changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is over all, God blessed for ever."

Such is the expansion which, in the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans, the same apostle gives us of the briefer expression which he here employs—"the world by wisdom knew not God." They knew many things, but they "knew not God." The great idea of God, in its unity and majesty, frittered itself away in their multiform idolatries, and the Infinite One became lost among the crowds of divinities whom the nations dreaded, or played with, rather than revered; while the recollection of his holiness was totally banished, by the gross sensualities which gradually came to be characteristic both of the gods and their worship. Human nature itself revolted, if not at the process pursued, at the issue to which it led. The schools of philosophy, enlightened enough to treat the popular idolatry with contempt, ultimately propagated the doctrines of either atheism or pantheism, some teaching that the universe was without a God, others that God was but a name for the universe itself; while those who more consciously felt their need of God could only "feel after him, if haply they might find him."

Such a condition of the world was assuredly most melan-

choly. They "knew not God." The phrase is brief, but of large and profound signification. To know God was the first and most necessary element of true wisdom; the first step towards an acquaintance with either their happiness, their duty, or themselves. Not knowing God, they knew nothing that could shed a light on their sinfulness, nothing that could supply a germ of renovation, nothing that could satisfy a yearning after peace. Being "without God," they were also "without hope," alike for the present and the future.

III. Let us advance now to a third observation presented by our text—namely, that the darkness which prevailed during the period antecedent to the institution of preaching, was for wise ends permitted. It was "in the wisdom of God" that "the world by wisdom knew not God."

It could scarcely have been expected, perhaps, that such an explanation of the fact would have been given. Looked at prospectively, it might have been deemed much more probable that God should have ordained a course of progressive wisdom, as well as of progressive light, and that the dawn of the human race should have advanced to the noon-day, instead of unnaturally receding to midnight. And since it was not so, is it to be concluded, either that the means of improvement were inadequate to the end, or that human corruption wrought out an issue of surprise and disappointment?

Neither of these conclusions is to be entertained. The whole case is comprehended "in the wisdom of God."

On the one hand, he is far from being taken by surprise. He to whom all things are foreknown foreknew also this, how negligent mankind would be of the means of divine knowledge vouchsafed to them, and how deeply they would revolt from his allegiance and his fear.

Nor, on the other hand, does he admit the inadequacy of the means employed. It had been, not wisdom, but folly, to have expected to reap where he had not sown, or to have expected to gather wheat from a field which he had sown with tares.

The darkened condition of the world had come about "in the wisdom of God." It may not be said, therefore, that it was either a necessary, or even a natural, result of divine arrangements; it was the fruit of human corruption and folly, but a fruit the growth of which it did not please God

to prevent, because a purpose which approved itself to his wisdom would be answered by allowing it to arrive at maturity.

What, then, if we may ask such a question, was the end which God had in view?

There can be no presumption in saying, in answer to this inquiry, that God's design in leaving the downward course of mankind for a time without further interference, was to afford scope for the development of human character; to create a theatre on which man might throw himself into unrestricted action, and show what really was in his heart. In other words, it was to provide an opportunity of testing human nature, and of demonstrating what man, left to himself, would do with the faculties and the means with which he had been endowed.

The principle which underlies this instance of the divine method, is that which characterizes the whole of God's administration towards our race; it is the principle of probation by experiment. It had been so in the garden of Eden, and it was so in the wilderness through which the expelled inhabitants of the garden were dispersed. There were now new conditions, but the problem was the same, though a larger space, and a longer time, were required for its solution. A long series of ages, indeed, was allotted to it; but not more, it must be deemed, than, "in the wisdom of God," were appropriate to the successive manifestation of the various phases of human character, and the complete exhaustion of the resources of the race for its own improvement.

For the problem to be wrought out was, undoubtedly, an important one, and not unworthy of its cost. God's ultimate design towards mankind was one of infinite mercy; but he had to do with a spirit of pride and self-elation, and this it was necessary to humble in the dust. Never must it be said that he had brought infinite resources to the help of those, who either needed not his aid, or could have helped themselves. It was requisite, therefore, for the lapse of ages to testify, in a manner that could not be gainsaid, into how deep a corruption the race had fallen, and how incompetent human resources had shown themselves to its rescue. It had been written of old time, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the pru-

dent;" and the course of human depravity was permitted to run on, until God had "made foolish the wisdom of this world." At the close of this administration it could be unanswerably asked, "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world?" (1 Cor. i. 19, 20.) The world lay bleeding, and ready to expire; but none of its philosophers, or its priests, could either heal its wounds, or assuage its anguish.

IV. Our fourth observation is, that, in this crisis of our race, God mercifully interposed for its welfare by a system of active religious instruction. "After that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

1. Here it is obvious to remark, in the first place, that preaching was of divine institution. You will readily call to mind the commission given by our divine Lord to his disciples, shortly before his ascension into heaven; "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." This was the grand characteristic of "the dispensation of the fulness of times." "And, lo! I am with you always," said the Lord, "even to the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20).

In order correctly to understand this institution, it is necessary to look at it on two sides, and to observe its narrowness on the one side, and its breadth on the other—its limitation and its extent.

Notice its limitation. The commission was addressed to disciples only. None else, indeed, were qualified to render the service required, and from none else would the Lord accept the obligation. It was for those who knew and loved the Gospel to make it known to others; but "unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant into thy mouth?" (Psalm l. 16.)

Notice its extent. The commission was addressed to disciples universally; not to a select portion, or to an order of men among them, but to disciples without any other qualification than their discipleship, and, consequently, to all. It supplied to every one of them both a warrant and a command to preach. Of none was silence required; to none was silence permitted.

I am aware that I thus deny by implication the existence



of an order of ministers—that is, of preachers—under the Christian dispensation, and that I herein oppose myself to a widely prevailing idea; but I do not shrink from this consequence of my words. In *the church* there are, undoubtedly, divinely-appointed officers, as pastors and deacons; but I know of no scriptural evidence for the institution by Christ of an order of religious functionaries for *the world*. I believe the preaching of the Gospel to have been committed equally to the whole body of disciples.\*

2. I observe, in the second place, that the institution of preaching was founded on the occurrence of new facts.

The commission was not to proclaim anew to every creature what, from the commencement of our race, had been proclaimed incessantly to all; it was to “preach *the Gospel*,” to publish the glad tidings. But tidings implied facts; and, if there were now tidings to be published to mankind, facts must have occurred of which they were to be informed.

And, in truth, facts did occur, of great and unspeakable importance. At length, “in the fulness of time, God sent forth his Son” into the world. He then fulfilled the announcement which in the beginning of the world’s ruin he made, and accomplished that purpose of his love which lay so long embosomed in promise and in prophecy. The Saviour was now no longer an intention, but a fact. He lived and laboured; he suffered and died; he rose from the grave and ascended into heaven, there to be exalted a Prince and a Saviour for evermore, able to save unto the uttermost all that should come unto God by him. These were facts the importance of which could not be exaggerated.

It was not that the occurrence of them made any difference as to the possibility, or the facility, of salvation. To him who “callest things that are not as though they were,” the work and sacrifice of Christ constituted a reality as a basis for action while to mankind they were but words expressive of his purpose; and salvation was as easy to the earliest sinners of our race, who had to trust in a promise as yet unfulfilled, as it was to those who saw the atoning Lamb upon the cross. But there were two respects in which the occurrence of these facts materially altered the case.

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\* See the Note at the end.

First, it was by means of these facts that God made a further manifestation of his character. I do not say a *different* manifestation of his character, for that had been always the same, not only in itself, but in its discoveries to mankind; but a *further* manifestation of it, one more full and impressive.

Generally speaking, the advent of the Messiah brought God into the world in a manner in which he had never antecedently been among men. He had hitherto been, not indeed the unknown, but the invisible. "No man," said our Lord's immediate forerunner, "hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath *declared* him" (John i. 18). So much emphasis attached to this word "*declare*," that our Lord subsequently added, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John xiv. 9). In the person of Jesus, it may perhaps be said, God was made visible to human eyes; at all events, an acquaintance with him entirely new was vouchsafed to man, and his character was rendered at once more distinctly intelligible, and more vividly appreciable.

More especially, in the great work of atonement for sin by the death of Christ the moral character of God was brought out in most striking forms. It had been told from the beginning, and sung, as the ages rolled on, by the prophets of the olden time; but it was exhibited in the cross with an unwonted brilliancy. Here "mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace embraced each other" (Psalm lxxxv. 10).

Some divines, indeed, have shown a disposition to restrict the light thrown by the cross of Christ on the character of God to one particular attribute, and have regarded it principally, if not exclusively, as a demonstration that God is love. I cannot concur in this view. That God is love is, indeed, an inestimable truth, and it is strikingly taught at Calvary; but it is not all that the world needs to know, nor is it all that Calvary teaches. The infinite holiness and inflexible justice of God appear as conspicuously at the cross as his wonderful compassion. If there we may learn, on the one hand, new lessons in the mystery of that love in which God "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all" (Rom. viii. 32), thence also we may derive our most touching conviction of the unmitigable abhorrence with which he

regards iniquity, and the irresistible force of that righteousness which necessitates its punishment.

“Here his whole name appears complete;  
Nor wit can prove, nor reason guess,  
Which of the letters best is writ,  
The truth, the justice, or the grace.”

Secondly, it was by means of these facts that God prepared a more powerful appeal to man's heart.

Not without power at any time were the communications to man from his Maker, but never had he been taught the things which belonged unto his peace with such a fulness and force as now. Was he to learn the excellency of the law of which he had been a transgressor? Let him read it in the cross of Christ, and in the dignity of him who, by so deep humiliation, magnified it, and made it honourable. Was he to learn the fact of his own guilt, and the greatness of his ill-desert? Let him read these in the cross of Christ, where a victim hung, who would not have been slain if *he* had not been a sinner, and a victim too precious to have been slain for him if he had not been a great one. Was he to learn to abhor himself in dust and ashes because of all his transgressions? Let him learn this, too, at the cross of Christ, where he should hear, not the thunders of a broken law, but the more melting utterances of a bruised heart. Or (not to multiply examples on so pregnant a topic), was he to learn the boundless extent of redeeming grace, and to arrive at a sure conviction that there was mercy, even for him? He should read this lesson also in the cross of Christ; for, after such a sacrifice, who could despair?

The cross of Christ had thus an eloquence for the human heart beyond all former example, and it created the elements of an appeal by the like of which man had not been addressed through all preceding ages.

3. Such were the new facts on which the institution of preaching was founded. I now observe, in the third place, that it bore to those facts a relation of appropriateness and wisdom. It was evidently appropriate. The facts belonged to the race in all its existing breadth, and through all its subsequent duration; yet they were themselves both local and temporary. Not like the sun, which repeated his glorious tale to every land, and through every age; nor like the sacrificial institute, which every nation had made its

own; these all-important facts were the events of a single country, and of a single life; and, but for some mode of communication, they had remained unknown to the world so deeply interested in them.

The precise mode of communication, indeed, was not necessary. The glad tidings might have been graven in lines of light upon the vaulted sky, constituting, as it were, a celestial meteor which should repeat its nightly story to the admiring nations. Or they might have been committed to "the sons of God," whose joyous bands would, neither less willingly nor less melodiously, have proclaimed the decease which Jesus accomplished at Jerusalem, than the life which he assumed at Bethlehem. But neither of these methods approved itself to the divine wisdom. "It pleased God by the" institution "of preaching to save them that believe."

Was the choice thus made a wise one? The method was certainly simple and unimposing; it might, by a superficial observer, be deemed feeble and unpromising. It was "to the Jews a stumblingblock, and to the Greeks foolishness" (1 Cor. i. 23); but, assuredly, it was not without its adaptation.

On the one hand, the institution of preaching required only what could easily be done. Had it demanded the possession, either of official influence, of scholastic learning, or even of natural eloquence, the commission had been practically invalid; but it had no such scope. Every one who heard the glad tidings could repeat them, and this was the simple service required. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come" (Rev. xxii. 17). It thus set all to work on what, if it might occupy a life, might also be done in its briefest intervals, or in its habitual intercourse.

On the other hand, the institution of preaching brought into play everything by which a communication could be rendered engaging and impressive.

The address of a fellow-man is pre-eminently fitted to gain attention to a matter of practical interest. There is nothing in it to surprise, to perplex, or to distract. The manner of communication is customary, and engages no regard, the entire attention being left for its matter. And it is no less adapted to fix attention, than to gain it. There is nothing

about it cold and formal, but it is naturally instinct with life and feeling. It readily partakes of the character of the communication made, and breathes pity, joy, and earnestness. This is especially the case when the speaker warns of a state of danger in which he himself has been involved, and tells of a mode of escape which he himself has found effectual; when he pleads as with a brother with whom he sympathizes, and for a Saviour whom he loves.

To this it must be added, that the disciples of Jesus—that is, the appointed preachers of his Gospel—are, in a marvellous manner, dispersed through all ranks of society, and all situations in life; an arrangement which might seem to have been made for the very purpose of disseminating the good news through the whole mass of mankind with the greatest possible rapidity, and of engaging on its behalf the mingled power and tenderness of the social and domestic sympathies.

There was, then, genuine, and even profound, wisdom, in selecting men as the agents for publishing the glad tidings of salvation. And the fitness of Christian men for preaching the Gospel is so singular, that it overweighs all accidental disadvantages. Not at enmity with eloquence or learning, nor unwilling to accept any aid they may be able to render, the preaching of the Gospel is by no means dependent upon them, but can be carried on effectually by unlettered and wayfaring men. The glad tidings are of a nature to make their way to the heart, though proclaimed by the humblest lips, or with a stammering and ungrammatical tongue.

Nor is the institution of preaching unworthy of the peculiar position in which it is placed in relation to the divine administration. It is not only the means which God has selected for making a more powerful appeal than formerly to the heart of man, it is the chosen means of his concluding and final appeal. As, in the work of redemption, God has nothing more to do, so, in communicating the knowledge of redemption, he has nothing more to say. On the one hand, he has uttered all his heart, and brought into action his deepest counsels; on the other, he has put into operation the best adapted instrumentality, and applied the most perfect means of conviction and persuasion. Even God's resources of persuasive appeal are now exhausted. As henceforth he has nothing to add, no more ample discoveries, no more affecting representations; so he has no new instrumentality



to employ, no more convincing or influential pleadings. Nor would it avail if he had; for, if these fail, none would succeed. What our Lord said to the Jews is emphatically applicable to hearers of the Gospel—"If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead" (Luke xvi. 31). The preaching of the Gospel, therefore, is fitly God's last appeal to man. After this, as after death, the judgment.

Let it be observed, however, that it is only of preaching as Christ instituted it that these things can be affirmed. The scope of this divine institution has been miserably contracted, and its influence fearfully diminished, by the professional character which it has, in the course of ages, acquired. The evils of this modification are twofold; on the one hand, a multitude of persons preach the Gospel who are not fitted for it, and, on the other, a far greater multitude do not preach the Gospel who are. The former are the members of the clerical profession, among whom, speaking generally, the existence of experimental piety is theoretically very improbable, and practically very rare; the latter are the sincere Christians of every name and of every grade, a body who unequivocally constitute "God's clergy," and to whom, without an exception, both the prerogative and the obligation of preaching the Gospel belong.

It is only as carried out on God's plan that the institution of preaching can be what God intended it to be, either in magnitude, or in effect. Under cover of a professional ministry, however numerous, or however liberally supported, by far the greater number of voices that should be employed, and these by far the most eloquent, are dumb; while those who speak, either speak of that which they neither feel nor understand, or are separated from their auditors by a line of demarcation which it was undoubtedly the design of Christ continually to overstep, if not entirely to obliterate. With so deleterious a modification of it, the fault ought not to be cast upon its author, if the practical result of the institution of preaching has been less than might have been expected from it; and it cannot be doubted that a reformation in this respect will precede large evangelical triumphs. The time when "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters do the sea," is the time, also, when every man shall say to his neighbour, Know thou the Lord.

In another aspect the wisdom of the institution of preaching appears. It exhibits a careful husbandry of means. It is after the manner of him who has created nothing in vain, and who permits nothing to be lost. Here, to his hand, is an instrumentality adequate and adapted to his purpose, and at once he employs it. Why should he not? That he is infinitely wealthy supplies no reason why he should be prodigal. Where every element is so precious, a strict economy possesses as much dignity as wisdom. What would be done with these innumerable quickened hearts and touching voices, if they were not made the means of disseminating the glad tidings? Would they not constitute a melancholy spectacle? A vast mass of instrumentality, adapted, indeed, to inestimable good, but practically useless; a priceless treasure abandoned to neglect; a solitary example of waste, amidst a universe where every element besides was turned to its best account!

It may be said, perhaps, that, in the requirement of their universal activity in the publication of the Gospel, God has laid on his people a burden at once unnecessary and excessive. Might he not have spared them so much trouble, and so much expense?

But which of them would he have gratified, if he had done so? Or who is he that asks such a boon at his Redeemer's hands? It was certainly none of his early disciples. And is it you, Christian, who have but now received your salvation as the purchase of his dying pains, and have scarcely finished uttering the heartfelt vow—

“Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all”?

Is it you, child of redemption, whose sympathies for your kind, now first awakened and sanctified, embrace with an unutterable tenderness their spiritual necessities? O no, my brother, it is not you. You feel that, while your Lord is enforcing an obligation which you cannot resist, he is conferring on you a prerogative which gratifies your highest ambition, and opening to you a source of pleasure having the sweetness of heaven. The awful doom would be to hear him say, “The tidings are glad, but publish them not; other voices shall serve me.”

In conclusion, our subject has two principal and important bearings.

The first of these arises from the fact that we *have heard* the Gospel. Lips of love have proclaimed to us the tidings of redeeming mercy, and thus God's great and last appeal has been made to our hearts. It is a solemn thought. If we were to live till the day of doom, we should hear nothing more touching than what has already been told us. In what manner have we responded to it? Have we, in humble faith and love, accepted the mercy declared to us? Or is the voice of the preacher, like the music "of one that playeth well upon an instrument," yielding only to the ear a fleeting gratification? Dear hearers, if this appeal avails not, all is lost, and you shut yourselves up to unbelief and perdition. Oh! in what tones of agonizing tenderness can we say once more, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

The second principal bearing of our subject arises from the fact that others—alas! how many—*have not heard* the Gospel. Upon us, therefore, if we know and love it, the obligation lies of proclaiming it to them.

Most immediately this obligation requires our personal activity. Some of us are pastors of churches, and preaching may be said to be our constant occupation; in a less technical sense, however, it ought to extend far beyond the scope of our professional activity, and to characterize our private as well as our official life. It is not pulpit-preaching merely that can satisfy our obligation. Some of us do not hold the pastoral office, but are dispersed in the quiet walks of life, and it might seem as though preaching were a thing scarcely to be required of us. Such a conclusion would be a mistake, however. Each of us that knows and loves the Gospel should preach it. Around us are the ignorant, and, according to the opportunities which our domestic and social position affords us, we are the appointed instruments of their instruction. Allow me, dear brethren, to ask, and to press home the question, What in this respect are we doing? Do we recognize the fact that a divinely-appointed service of religious teaching—a service, not only of inestimable, but of peculiar, value, and such as can be fulfilled by none but ourselves—is committed to us? And are we doing our best to acquit ourselves faithfully of it? O Christian! awake to thy responsibility! In the words of an apostle I say to thee, "Make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Tim. iv. 5).

More remotely this obligation connects us with the heathen world, the condition of which is, to the present hour, one of deplorable ignorance. To this, by the grace of God, we are not wholly insensible. We are more or less embarked in the missionary enterprise, and we promote the preaching of the Gospel as its great labour. Our subject, then, suggests to us several practical observations.

1. Our attitude has a divine sanction. It is by preaching that God will save men. It cannot be said, therefore, that, in this respect, we have either overlooked a just principle, or committed a practical mistake. Some observers of our toil, indeed, in high conceit of their own wisdom, warn us that we have no scope. They tell us that, on the one hand, some nations are too wise, and, on the other, some are too ignorant, for the Gospel; and they bid us at once bow to the ancient wisdom of the Brahmin, and begin with the civilization of the Hottentot. We believe, however, that God has taken a juster measure, alike of the spiritual ruin of human nature, and its capacity of renovation, and we pursue with confidence the course which he has indicated.

To those who go among the nations at our bidding, and on our behalf, our first injunction shall still be, Preach the Gospel. Instant in season and out of season, preach the Gospel. Seek out those who have never heard it, till you find none. Work after the model of the apostolic missionary, who thus laid down his principle of action: "So have I strived to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, . . . but, according as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of they shall see, and they that have not heard shall understand" (Rom. xv. 20, 21). And make it your ambition to share his rejoicing when he said, "*From Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ*" (Rom. xv. 19).

2. It is worthy of consideration, whether, upon the principle thus laid down, some beneficial modification of the missionary work might not be effected, and whether some nearer approach to the scriptural model might not be arrived at. Far be my lips from uttering a single word depreciatory of any branch of missionary labour; but let me be permitted to suggest an inquiry, whether, since it is by *preaching* that God will save men, there might not scripturally, and, therefore, advantageously, be at least a class of missionaries who



should be preachers only, passing, with more or less rapidity, but continually passing, over the ground, declaring the glad tidings, and not detained by any of those occupations which compel a fixed and permanent residence. The crying necessities of the world appear to me to rebuke the sitting down of so large a number of missionaries as schoolmasters, translators, or pastors of churches; devoted to labours which, however important, may, in part at least, be confided to other hands, while the evangelist goes on, to repeat the good news to the perishing multitudes beyond.

Let me illustrate the case by a comparison. The wreck of a noble vessel has thrown into the sea a large number of persons, now, of course, in peril of immediate destruction. You have been providentially permitted to come to the rescue, and, by means of the life-boat, you have already gathered on board your friendly bark a goodly company, safe from all further danger. What is your next step? To devote yourself assiduously to the refreshment of the rescued? By no means. You hastily say to them, "Do you take care of one another now, while I hurry back to the help of those who are still struggling with the waves."

Why should we not act on a similar principle in relation to the spiritual necessities of mankind? Undoubtedly, the care of the converts among the heathen is important, and they might, perhaps, be better cared for by a European missionary; but, putting the two things into no unfair comparison, the saving of souls from death is *far more* important, and the attaining of this end would amply compensate for any supposable inferiority of pastoral care. Should there be no force in Christ's own example, who, when the people of Capernaum "stayed him that he should not depart from them," replied, "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also, for therefore am I sent"? (Luke iv. 43.) What would have become of Christianity in the Roman empire, if Paul and Barnabas had, on the first missionary journey, settled down as pastors at Antioch and Lystra?

Why may not converts in any part of the world, under the guidance of the same Spirit, and with the additional help of the New Testament, make as good pastors as those brought out of pagan darkness in Asia Minor, or in Spain? And, if the result of throwing them on their own resources were to be the growth of some rank weeds in the Lord's vineyard,



wherein would modern missionary churches give more trouble than those planted in the infancy of Christianity gave to the apostles themselves? The mistakes of the first churches, indeed, indirectly produced inestimable benefits to those of after ages, and it is possible that the young churches of a later period may profit by their experience. At all events, they may better learn to go alone, as they ultimately must, by being early initiated into the process.

One thing, however, is clear—namely, that the present system of missionary pastorates is acting as an impediment to the evangelization of the world. So vast an amount of European life and money is absorbed by the contracted mission fields at present occupied, that the missionary work presses severely on its resources, not without difficulty sustaining itself, and quite incompetent to the requisite advance. The state of the work itself, therefore, demands some such change as I have indicated, unless—which God and Christian charity forbid!—we are content to leave one half the world to an indefinite period of darkness and perdition.

3. In the missionary field, the genuine character of the evangelical ministry should be preserved and cultivated. Great value undoubtedly attaches to the plans which have been adopted for training a body of native pastors, and employing the talents of native converts: let me be allowed to ask, however, whether such endeavours ought to stop here. Is not every one who understands the Gospel *sufficiently gifted* to teach it? And, although not every convert might be adapted to proclaim the glad tidings in the streets of a populous city, or to undertake a lengthened itineracy, should those influences be willingly lost which even the least eloquent, and the least instructed, might exercise in the social and domestic circle? Should not the missionary motto be, Every convert a preacher? Is it not Christ's injunction to every sincere disciple, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee"? (Mark v. 19.)

4. In carrying out this divine institution we need not fear the result. True, our endeavours meet in some quarters with contempt; but of a change in this respect there is no hope. If we were apostles, the same men would call our preaching "foolishness." They pine, perhaps, for the exercise of public authority, for the prestige of ecclesiastical

establishments, or for the exhibition of clerical pomp. Such is still "the wisdom of the world," the same in its origin, and in its issue, as that of ancient days; but "the only wise God" is not to be seduced by its glare. He still adheres to "the foolishness of preaching;" and now, as then, it shall be found that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Cor. i. 25). There is scarcely room, indeed, to say that God will pursue such a course to put the pride of man to shame, and to make foolish the wisdom of the world; since he has in reality chosen the elements of the greatest power—has passed by the tinsel, to seize upon the gold.

While characteristically employing the wisest instrumentality, however, it is not upon the instrumentality itself that its divine Author leans for success. He knows how man's poor heart both can, and will, resist the best adapted appeals, and how sadly even the glad tidings of salvation may fall without sweetness on the reluctant ear. But while, on the one hand, the preachers of the Gospel shall be unto God "a sweet savour of Christ, both in them that believe, and in them that perish" (2 Cor. ii. 15), on the other, he will not be disappointed of the triumph of his mercy. Jesus is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance, as well as remission of sins. With him is the residue of the Spirit, and by his divine influence, as almighty as it is gracious, the stony heart shall be taken away, and a heart of flesh be given in its room. Thus already hath the Lord taken out of the nations a people for his name, and thus, in his own time, will he subdue all peoples unto himself.

Finally, the subject is powerfully adapted to quicken our missionary zeal. It is by preaching that God will save men. How important, then, is the relation which preaching bears to the salvation of the world! It is the true correlative to the great fact of redeeming mercy. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). "But how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?" (Rom. x. 14, 15.) It is preaching that constitutes the connecting link between the perishing nations and the salvation which has been wrought for them. What a sorrowful and

humbling consideration it is, that, at a distance of nearly two thousand years from the great transaction of Calvary, so large a portion of mankind have never yet heard of a fact which so deeply interests them! O ye generations of departed Christian men! how told ye not the dying peoples of the mercy of their God?

And we, who live in a period when the slumber of ages has been broken up, and to whose hands our fathers have bequeathed a work which they were among the first to undertake, and which they did not expect their children to abandon, with what yet unproportioned zeal do we prosecute the toil! The universal preaching of the Gospel is the Christian work of the age, since it must be preached to all nations ere the end can come, and the end cannot be far. The march of Providence is plainly, and even strikingly, in this direction. In how many quarters the most high God is saying to us, "Behold, I set before you an open door, and no man shall shut it" (Rev. iii. 8). And we are the generation upon whom this grand responsibility is thrown! How far we are from being worthy of such a calling! The lingering response made to the call for augmented labours in India—is this worthy of us? The deathlike silence, as yet unbroken, which dismally replies to the animating voice of inviting China—is this worthy of us? The vast breadth of pagan darkness hitherto unpenetrated by the foot even of a single missionary—is this no scandal to us? O, my brethren! shall it not be even yet that the vision of the ancient seer shall be fulfilled, and that the expectant perishing of every land shall exclaim—"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Rom. x. 15.)

Our singular qualifications—I do not mean as Baptists, although there would be force in such an appeal, but as Christians—have we no true appreciation of these? Our high prerogative—have we no just estimate of this? Our solemn obligation—does this lie upon us with no adequate pressure? The celestial joy of our service—does this afford us no sufficient stimulus? And while, in the wisdom of God, the salvation of the world is left contingent on an effort which it is for us to make, is our zeal so disproportionate as almost to suggest the question, *Was* this in the wisdom of God? Was it not rather his foolishness? The sun and the

stars have long ago told their tale of wonder; the angels of heaven have ages since declared all that they may tell of celestial pity; it is only we who linger on our errand of mercy—an errand so indispensable that, while we linger, the world, waiting, dies.

O, my brethren! let us at least be united to-day in shame and brokenness of heart. Let us penitently accept anew the high distinction which is conferred on us. Let us open our ears and our hearts afresh to the appeal which God from heaven makes to us; and let us respond to it with a liberality so ample as to demonstrate its wisdom by its power.

#### NOTE TO PAGE 153.

OF such long standing, and of so great familiarity, with me, is the idea to which I have here given utterance, that I was scarcely aware, either in the composition or the delivery of this discourse, that I was treading on controverted ground. As the observations of some most respected brethren, however, have brought this rather vividly to my recollection, I may be permitted, perhaps, to enter into a brief explanation, in addition to the few words which an attentive reader of my sermon may perceive that I have introduced into the text of it.

And first, as to the meaning of the word *κηρύσσειν*. It is undoubtedly true, that in its primary meaning there is involved an idea of office; according to the lexicographers, however, this idea of office does not continue to attach itself to the derived uses of the term. The several elements comprehended in the primary meaning are thus successively brought out by Schleusner, in his *Lexicon*. 1. To cry aloud. 2. To announce by public authority. 3. To diffuse information. 4. To advise in the name of another. 5. To teach. The reader who has Schleusner's *Lexicon* at hand will find much satisfaction in examining the examples adduced. I think, therefore, that I have not gone beyond authority in assigning to the word *κηρύσσειν*, to *preach*, the simple meaning of orally making known.

Next, as to the supposed institution by Christ of an order of ministers. I have said in the text enough to show that I fully recognize the offices which the Lord has instituted in and for his church. It is for those who think he has instituted any other office to bring forward proof of their opinion. On this point reference will doubtless be made to Ephes. iv. 11, 12: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers: for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Upon this passage I remark, first, that it evidently describes a provision for the edification of the church, not for the conversion of the world; and, secondly, that the provision described consisted entirely of the outpouring of supernatural gifts, which gave to it a temporary character—a character so tem-



porary that, in the epistles to Timothy and Titus, in which we look for indications of the permanent organization of the church, no reference is made to any of them. That the passage does relate to the supernatural gifts is evident from 1 Cor. xii. 28: "And God hath set some in the church, first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles; then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." Both the terms and the connexion of this passage are decisive of its import.

Unless further evidence be adduced on this subject, I maintain my position, that Christ did not institute an order of ministers, but committed the preaching of his Gospel *equally* to all his disciples.

If, after this reference to the supreme authority, I may without impropriety refer to reasons of a general kind, I would respectfully ask, why there should be in the world an order of ministers. For the care and edification of the church there *are* required men at once of peculiar qualifications, and invested to a certain extent with the authority of Christ; but nothing of this kind is required for the world, since the diffusion of religious knowledge is that to which every convert is competent, and in which all converts ought to be engaged. An order of ministers, therefore, may justly be regarded as a mere superfluity, at once a human invention, and not without marks of human folly.

Of this ecclesiastical conception it may not, perhaps, be difficult to trace the origin. A pastor implies a flock, and no man can be regarded as holding the pastoral office unless in connexion with a people of whom he has charge. The office of the ministry, however, may be held in a general and abstract manner, not having respect to any particular charge, but conferring, as is supposed, power and authority to administer the word and sacraments of the Gospel in any and every place. That the office of the ministry thus abstractly conceived of has been of great ecclesiastical convenience, both in and out of religious establishments, I do not doubt; but, as it is devoid of the authority of Christ, on the one hand, so, on the other, its direct tendency and effect are to supersede Christ's own appointment—the office of the pastorate.

It may be said, perhaps, that the office of the ministry is favourable to the diffusion of the Gospel, since a person invested with it preaches with a certain prestige and influence which predispose people to hear him. Alas! how totally I differ from this view, and how little I can expect any one to agree with me who holds it! I will avow the fact, however, let it go for what it may, that I regard the influence of the ministerial office as one of the greatest impediments to the successful preaching of the Gospel. In so far as its influence is really felt by the hearers, it must inevitably supersede by the human the divine, and transform the word of God into the word of man; while it gives to the preacher a merely professional standing, and exposes him to suspicions of interested motives which are disastrously adverse to his design. The Gospel is much more likely to prevail when preached by a parent to his child, or by a man to his neighbour.

I would be allowed to ask, finally, whether there can be an order of ministers without more or less restricting that universal agency on which our Lord evidently relied. It is obvious that a professional



ministry, as it is now extant, co-exists with a vast amount of individual inaction among the disciples of Jesus. It is the plea which is used to justify that inaction, and I believe it to be the sole parent of that inaction itself. Had there never been a professional ministry, there had never been an idle church. Nor can it be otherwise. There is no gradation in the commission, but what belongs to any belongs to all; and no attempt can be made to fix its obligation with especial weight upon one order of men, without, in exact proportion, releasing all others from its yoke.

## THE HAPPINESS OF THE PIOUS DEAD.\*

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DEAR BRETHREN,—The words from which I propose to address you on this solemn occasion you will find in the 14th chapter of Revelation, and the 13th verse:—"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

Having already presented to you the series of magnificent visions in the midst of which this passage occurs,† I shall not here take any further notice of them, but shall regard the words I have read in their simplicity of evangelical meaning. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

I observe then, generally, that the text is partly descriptive, and partly declaratory. These two lights will be sufficient for our guidance through the meditations it suggests.

I. The text is descriptive. It speaks of those "who die in the Lord."

1. It speaks of those "who die."

Yes, there are those "who die," as the weeds we wear this day too sorrowfully testify; and as, indeed, the habitations we occupy bear continual witness. In truth, all die; the young and the old, the poor and the rich, the sick and the healthy, the busy and the idle, the peasant and the prince—all die; for so "it is appointed unto all men" since "sin entered into the world, and death by sin." And none can escape the doom.

2. It speaks of those "who die in the Lord."

Yes, there are those "who die in the Lord," as our rejoicing memories assure us; but these are not all men. How many, alas! there are who cannot do so, having never heard even of the name of him who is able to save! And how many, it may be said with still greater sorrow, of those who

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\*Preached at Camberwell, October 12th, 1862; on occasion of the death of Mrs. Steane.

†The 14th chapter of Revelation had been previously read.

have often heard it have not learned either to trust it, or to love! No, not all men "die in the Lord."

But who, then, do so? And what is necessary to verify this description?

A satisfactory answer to this question requires it to be viewed in two aspects—a negative and a positive.

Positively, to "die in the Lord" requires more than a mere profession of religion, or a nominal Christianity. It requires a personal faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and a habit thence resulting of vital piety, and practical holiness. A religious profession is but a garment, with which, indeed, a genuine Christian may fitly be clothed, but under which, also, may lurk every form of worldliness and iniquity. No, dear hearers, "the form of godliness," without "the power" of it, cannot save you. Only those who live to the Lord can "die in the Lord."

Negatively, to "die in the Lord" does not require a triumphant death. A happy deathbed experience, such as God sometimes—perhaps, often—grants to his children, undoubtedly has its value, and I am far from wishing to depreciate it; but it is not necessary to a satisfactory hope. In how many cases—as, indeed, in that which is now so affecting before us—does death occur in circumstances which allow no manifestation of the feelings; and in how many more is the deathbed rather serene than ecstatic, rather sustained than triumphant. In some instances, indeed, the exercises of the departing Christian may be obscure and anxious, his mind harassed with doubts, or agitated by conflict; and yet, through grace, he shall be "more than conqueror," for he has lived to the Lord, and he dies "in the Lord." Heed it not, brethren, amidst what experiences you may die. These may be affected by many circumstances of no real moment, or ordered for purposes of wisdom hidden from your eyes. Leave the decision of this matter to your Lord. Live to Christ, and die as he pleases.

II. The text is declaratory. Its announcement is, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

It cannot be the meaning of this language that to be saints death is a source of blessedness in itself. Even to them it must involve both suffering, and loss. The idea is, that those who die in the Lord are happy notwithstanding death, and, in part, by its instrumentality. Their great des-

sedness is one with which death cannot interfere, and to the full enjoyment of which, under divine arrangement, it helps to conduct them.

In discoursing on the happiness of the pious dead, it would be both natural and easy to enumerate and enlarge upon the general sources of future blessedness; such as the unveiled manifestation of the divine glory, the personal presence and love of the Lord Jesus Christ, the entire freedom from sin and sorrow, with other topics akin to these; familiar, however, as I am sure your minds are with them, I shall on this occasion adopt a different line of thought.

On looking closely at the general subject, it is obvious that the happiness of the pious dead arranges itself into two portions, divided from each other by two events of great importance to it—the resurrection of the body, and the final judgment. As these events do not occur till the end of the world, there is now a period of considerable, though to us of undefined length, between their occurrence and a Christian's departure out of this life. His future happiness is thus, as I have said, divided into two portions: the first antecedent to the resurrection and the judgment, imperfect and comparatively brief; the second consequent upon these events, perfect and eternal. It is natural, and indeed inevitable, that the happiness of the pious dead during the former of these periods, should possess some peculiarities which it may be interesting to glance at; and afterwards we may observe how, by the resurrection and the judgment, it will be augmented and completed.

1. I present to you, in the first place, a few thoughts respecting the former of these periods, or what is usually called the intermediate state.

Our thoughts—often, perhaps—approach this subject with an inquisitiveness the more acute and anxious, because it is that which comes into most immediate contact with our feelings, as the state into which we enter immediately upon death; there hangs over it, however, an obscurity which it has not been easy satisfactorily to penetrate.

It has been supposed by some that immediately on death the soul sinks into a state—not of sleep, for that is a bodily condition—but of unconsciousness resembling sleep; a state in which it remains until the sound of the last trumpet awakens the body and the soul together, to a life which

seems to have been not for a moment interrupted. The possibility of this cannot be questioned, but there are strong reasons why it cannot be accepted as a fact. Arbitrary and gratuitous in itself, and without any possible foundation in fact or direct knowledge, the supposition seems to be wholly irreconcilable with the language of Holy Writ. Take the text itself for an example: "Blessed ARE the dead who die in the Lord." And the force of this language is increased by the phrase immediately connected with it—"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord *from henceforth*:" that is, as the best critics instruct us, from the moment of their death. Christian experience goes in the same direction. "I have a desire to depart," says Paul, "and to be with Christ, which is *far better*" (Phil. i. 23): but surely he could not have thought it "*far better*" to sink into unconsciousness, than to live and labour as to him it was given. Nor, indeed, is the phrase, "to be with Christ," compatible with such a state; it assuredly implies the continuance of conscious life, only with a change of its object—as he says elsewhere, "absent from the body, and present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8).

It has been supposed by others that, admitting the continuance of conscious life, the disembodied spirits of the just reside in a separate place; not heaven in its highest sense, but a kind of subordinate heaven, to be called paradise. I say at once that I have no belief in the existence of any such place, intermediate between earth and heaven. The Hades of the ancient Greeks was a region comprehending both Elysium and Tartarus—their heaven and hell; and a region not intermediate, but of final residence, for they dreamed of no heaven or hell beside. And that the word, together with its representative in Hebrew, *Sheol*, was used in the same sense by the sacred writers is evident from our Lord's employment of it in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (where, as elsewhere in our English Bibles, it is infelicitously translated *hell*); a parable of which the entire scene is laid in Hades, including both the fire in which the rich man is tormented, and the place where Abraham is sitting with Lazarus in his bosom. (Luke xvi.) As to the word paradise, respecting which the Rabbinical writers seem to have invented as many fables as the pagans did respecting Hades, and by which many eminent Christian divines have



understood a region of secondary blessedness, I profess my agreement with those critics who judge that Paul gives but a duplicate account of a single vision, when he says that he was "caught up to the third heaven," and that he was "caught up into paradise" (2 Cor. xii. 2-4); the place being but one. And in this sense I understand the address of our Lord to the dying thief—"This day shall thou be with me in paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43). The question, indeed, seems to be settled by the language of the apostle, when he speaks of being "present with the Lord;" for, as in a human body, Christ can be but in one place: and a heaven without the presence of Christ, would be a heaven as miserable in fact as the notion of it seems to be unscriptural.

It is my full belief, therefore, that the pious dead are in heaven with Christ, and in possession of all the great elements of future happiness, those which characterize essentially both its former and its latter portion. It is obvious, however, that this felicity, as experienced antecedently to the resurrection and the final judgment, must have some marked peculiarities, at which I shall now take a passing glance.

Among these peculiarities I mention, first, the exercise of hope.

Hope, the Christian's great helper on earth, may seem to take leave of him on the confines of heaven, when, to so great an extent at least, it is superseded by fruition. But it is not wholly so. Much, indeed—very much—of that which he has hoped for he then attains, but not all. His spirit is in glory, but his body is in the grave, a monument of triumph to the great conqueror, Death. Is it for ever to remain there? It is not, and he knows it is not. He has taken the conviction with him to heaven from earth, where he had learned to say—"I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job xix. 25, 26). For this he has yet to look forward and to hope, and to hope with a degree of confidence augmented by the lights of his advanced position. Nor is hope without patience. We may regard him as adopting the language of the ancient patriarch—"All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee; thou wilt have a desire to the work of thy hands" (Job xiv. 14, 15).

And not to the resurrection only is the longing of the glorified saint directed. The final judgment itself is to him, with all its solemnities, an object, not of dread, but of desire. In most important respects (of which I shall have to speak more fully presently) it is the destined period for the consummation of his felicity; and his hope may seem to breathe itself forth in the perpetual prayer—"Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

As a second peculiarity of the blessedness of the pious dead antecedently to the resurrection, I may notice a lively interest in the affairs of this world.

Not, indeed, on personal or relative grounds; but as the scene of God's vast administration of mercy. In this great object the disciple of Christ had begun to feel an interest while in this world, and he had felt himself privileged in being permitted to link himself with its activities. And now he beholds the same object in greater grandeur. Before him are spread with a new celestial vividness the end to be attained, the methods—here appearing so complicated, and so mysterious—by which it is to be reached, and the instrumentalities to be employed for its accomplishment. The whole theatre of war is under his eye; the contending hosts; the apparent delay, but real progress. And can he look on the scene unmoved? A loving heart forbids. May we not conceive that with inexpressible interest he watches the progress and the issue of every conflict; that with unutterable eagerness he longs for the predestined triumph; that if, while his all-wise Lord can wait, he can wait too, his inmost heart will echo the great angel's cry—"Thrust in thy sickle and reap, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe" (Rev. xiv. 15); and his loudest voice will be ready to repeat the ultimate acclaim—"Hallelujah! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth"? (Rev. xix. 6.) "Which things," says the apostle, "the angels desire to look into." They, indeed, are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation" (Heb. i. 14). We do not know that departed saints are so; but, if they are, it is surely not reluctantly that they come.

A third peculiarity of the blessedness of the pious dead before the resurrection may be regarded as arising out of the perpetually shifting state of the population of the celestial world. Not that any are now driven from it, like

the angels "who kept not their first estate;" but multitudes must be perpetually coming into it. As yet, the "many mansions" prepared by the love of him who has gone before are not full. The destined tenants are not only not arrived, perhaps they are not brought into being, or they may be as yet pursuing the weary pathway of their mortal pilgrimage. They are, however, coming; and all must come. The population of heaven, therefore, must be incessantly on the increase. But who shall tell how rapidly? It has been calculated, if I recollect rightly, that one human being is brought into this world every second of time; perhaps it may be almost as frequently that a redeemed spirit enters into the realms of glory. And, assuredly, those who have already entered are not indifferent to these wonderful accessions. What an intensely special interest they may have in some of the newly arrived! In this they greet a parent, in that they embrace a child; here they recognize a relation, there a long-loved friend; now a pastor, then a group of fellow-Christians. Nor can they be indifferent to those who come from the north and the south, the east and the west, from every nation, and tribe, and kindred, and tongue, under heaven, to sit down in the kingdom of God. With what shouts of welcome, perpetually renewed, must the heavens be ringing all the day long, while each that enters adds his emphatic note to the ceaseless song of praise.

Such peculiarities—and others might, doubtless, be mentioned—has heaven before the resurrection. It is heaven with something of earth in it; heaven not wholly detached from the graces and the sympathies of the lower world.

2. But let us now direct our attention to the remaining part of our subject; and inquire in what manner, by the resurrection of the body and the last judgment, the blessedness of those "who die in the Lord" will be augmented and consummated.

It is not much that is told us respecting the manner in which these great events will be brought about, but a few points are clearly indicated.

At a period when the earth will be fully inhabited, and both its social enjoyments and public activities will be at their height—mankind will be "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage" (Matt. xxiv. 38)—"the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the

voice of the archangel, and the trump of God" (1 Thess. iv. 16). On the actual nature, or cause, of the sound thus described it were vain to speculate; it suffices to know that with absolute suddenness it breaks on the world's ear, being heard at the same moment round the whole earth, and arresting all its affairs by its well-understood announcement, "The Judge is come." The scene of this great event is said by the apostle to be "in the air" (1 Thess. iv. 17), or in the higher regions of the atmosphere.

The description is thus continued by our Lord himself:—"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations" (Matt. xxv. 31, 32). The vast assembly is gradually formed by the combination of its several elements. "Them which sleep in Jesus he will bring with him" (1 Thess. iv. 14), from that highest heaven where they have antecedently dwelt with him; and, to meet these returning spirits, their quickened bodies will rise from their graves. There will then remain on the earth some—perhaps many—followers of Jesus who have not died, and of their destiny the apostle gives us an account in the following terms:—"Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52). It is to be supposed that a process somewhat similar in its order will take place in reference to the wicked.

The immediate object of the resurrection is preparation for the impending judgment. The reconstruction of the entire human personality is required for this purpose. It is man, the whole man, that has lived; and it is man, the whole man, that must appear in judgment. Things done "in the body," are to be recompensed "in the body" (2 Cor. v. 10).

To those who "die in the Lord" the judgment is a process of justification. It might seem, perhaps, as if the judgment would necessarily be a process of examination and discrimination of character; or as if the race would be assembled before the Judge in a promiscuous multitude, each individual to be subjected to a separate scrutiny, and then assigned to his appropriate class. It can scarcely be conceived, however, that, after so long and so blessed a separation, the righteous



will again be mingled with the wicked. With respect even to the saints who will be on earth at the coming of the Lord, the apostle distinctly says—"First the dead in Christ shall rise; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up *together with them* in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17). It is not possible, indeed, to conceive that, with God, character has remained until then unascertained, or unrecompensed; the saints having undoubtedly been long in heaven, and the impenitent in hell. Nor, indeed, does the object of the great day seem to be the arrival at a decision on the part of God, so much as the manifestation to the assembled world, and attendant angels, of the justice of a decision already formed; and in this sense the apostle must be understood to call it "the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Romans ii. 5), or of the making manifest, by the public exposition of character, the righteousness of the judgment which he has formed, and already partially executed.

The dead in Christ, therefore, appearing in the judgment as believers in Jesus, and the sincerity of their faith not only having been long recognized by the Judge, but then by the process of judgment made manifest to all, the great judicial act is simply a recognition that, by submitting to the righteousness of God, they have satisfied all the demands of the divine law, and stand legally justified before its administrator. This, in substance, is nothing new. In their happy experience on earth they were "justified by faith," and as justified by faith they have enjoyed a period of blessedness in heaven; but it is new in its circumstances, and in what is new it is a great addition to their happiness. Hitherto their satisfactory relation to the divine government has been, as it were, a private matter, there having been no public action of a judicial kind by which it could be officially recognized, or made generally known: to this extent, therefore, they might be said to have remained under the reproach of sin, though not under its curse; and it cannot but be an unspeakable addition to their felicity that that reproach should be rolled away, and their legal righteousness through faith be officially recognized and proclaimed.

And with what infinite pleasure will the Judge perform this part of his functions! Can there be any uncertainty whether HE will recognize that perfect robe of righteousness



which he himself wrought out when he became "obedient unto death," and which his redeemed have so long worn? Ah! never did that white garment of unspotted righteousness appear with the splendour with which it shall shine amidst the lights of "eternal judgment."

A second object of the judgment to those who "sleep in Jesus," is reward. "Their works do follow them;" not as meritorious deeds (for which, as justified, they have no occasion), but as expressions of love and grateful consecration to their Lord. It cannot be that so loving a heart should be oblivious of these; and, in that day of administrative pomp and official dignity, they shall be publicly acknowledged. "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty and ye gave me drink" (Matt. xxv. 34, 35). The parable of the talents exhibits the same fact. "After a long time, the lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents; behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. xxv. 19-21). Deeds of faithful service, indeed, and acts of loving sacrifice, are not unrewarded now; but, that their great reward may be conferred in a distinguished manner, the bestowment of it is assigned to the day when the whole race shall be assembled for the final act of the divine government, and when the declared approbation of the Judge will be the most illustrious honour that can be received.

Ah! my brethren, what an exhibition shall be made in that day of deeds of devotedness to Christ, of which the world has either known nothing, or thought little. From the acts of martyrs who have given their bodies to the flames, to the humblest disciple who has been assailed by the tongue of calumny; from deeds of heroic missionary labour, to the obscurest efforts of the Christian visitor; from the amplest outpourings of Christian liberality, to the cup of cold water in the name of a disciple—all shall be remembered then, recognized in its loving motive, and recompensed with

celestial bounty. But *how* recompensed who shall say? Into what realities of bliss the "Well done" shall expand itself, or the crowns and thrones—those earthly baubles which are employed metaphorically to help our conceptions—be interpreted? All we can say is, "The day shall declare it." Alas! that a consciousness of our great unfaithfulness should suggest the probability of so many drawbacks from so magnificent a reward!

There is yet one passage of Scripture which must not be passed unnoticed, although I fear I can throw little light on it. "Dare any of you," says the apostle, "having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? . . . Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor. vi. 1-3.) The language is striking, but it is impenetrably obscure. The commentators suggest several interpretations, but none of decisive weight. If it is to be understood in the sense that the saints, after their own justification and reward, are to be associated with Christ in the subsequent judgment of the wicked, it must be regarded simply as an act of infinite condescension adapted to do them honour. An honour how great! and, considered in its motive, how gratifying!

The judgment being accomplished, it is now that the gladness of the resurrection will be fully realized.

It is, in the first instance, an illustrious triumph over death. The victims of the King of Terrors and the universal Conqueror are rescued from his grasp, and the perished tenants of that long-sealed chamber, the grave, come forth to a restored and expanded life. "This corruptible puts on incorruption, and this mortal puts on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. xv. 53, 54). O how rejoicingly shall the spirits of the pious dead welcome the return of these long-lost partners of their being, which thrilled with the feelings, wrought out the activities, and bore the sorrows, of their earthly existence! And the body will be restored, not in the condition in which it was parted with. "It was sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it was sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it was sown in weakness, it

is raised in power; it was sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor. xv. 42-44). No longer a hotbed for disease, bearing its bitter and multiform fruits; no longer an instrument too feeble for the energies required to employ it; no longer composed of materials uncongenial with its more refined occupant: it is now a spiritual body, with powers altogether adequate to the wants of the spirit of which it is the vehicle; imposing no restriction upon either intelligence, emotion, or action; and in no degree incapable of wearing the honours of heaven, or sympathizing in its joys.

It is still more delightful to add, that the raised bodies of the saints will be "fashioned like unto his glorious body" (Phil. iii. 21), by virtue of whose resurrection they have risen. Beyond question, the human body of our Lord Jesus Christ must have assumed the most glorious appearance which it is possible even for divine wisdom and power to give it. It might have been thought it would be unique, but, wonderful to say! it is a pattern. It is now *the pattern* to which all shall be conformed. The body of each of the pious dead shall be "fashioned like unto" it. Not, assuredly, so that, as in his case, the glory of the indwelling divinity may shine through; but so, perhaps, that the glory which shines upon them may be reflected from them, and thus constitute a more perfect resemblance.

Thus will redemption be perfected, and the happiness of the pious dead be made complete. Then shall the song be sung with a meaning and an emphasis which it never reaches on earth:—"O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? . . . Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. xv. 55-57).

But I check myself. I can go no further—perhaps I have already gone too far. Let us reverently say, "Blessed"—for ever blessed—"are the dead who die in the Lord."

Dear hearers! which of you will possess this blessedness? Let me ask, rather, which of you will lose it? Is it not a thought to stir you into earnestness, that such felicity is placed within your reach? But give yourself to Jesus—no more. And is that condition too hard? But, if this be lost, O sinner! *what then?*

O Christian! what is before you? Sorrow, you reply, and sickness, death, and the grave. Ah! you look too near, and

too low. Can you not lift up your eyes a little, and catch a glimpse of the brighter things beyond? "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

What sweet thoughts our meditations furnish in remembrance of those whom death takes from us! With us, indeed, they are no more; yet "not lost, but gone before," where those "who sleep in Jesus" are so happy. Can we repine that they are gone?

"O! 'tis a heaven worth dying for."

Mrs. STEANE, whose removal dresses so many of us in weeds to-day, was of honourable descent. She was a granddaughter of the late Rev. Abraham Booth, one of the most distinguished among the ministers of the Baptist denomination. She was called by divine grace in early youth; and having, with several members of the family of which she was the eldest daughter, been baptized at Camberwell by Mr. Steane, who had recently settled there, she became a member of the Independent Church on Clapham Common, then under the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Brown. Under the influence of a gentle constitutional temperament, combined with a sedulous moral culture, her character was eminently matured before she assumed the weightier responsibilities of her life; and in the midst of these she habitually conducted herself with distinguished prudence and goodness. Hers was emphatically the "meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." Her just and simple eulogy may be, that she never said an unkind thing, and never did a wrong one. For a lengthened period of her life her health was too feeble to allow her to take an active share in what may be generally regarded as the duties of the pastor's wife; however, in many quiet ways she did "what she could," while the influence of her practical goodness and wisdom was felt through the whole church, and contributed largely to its unbroken peace and prosperity. During eight-and-twenty years she was the pastor's earthly solace and strength, and the sunshine of a pious and affectionate domestic life, amidst the joys and virtues of which she was permitted to train two beloved children—three had died in infancy—for God, and for his service.

I have already said that Mrs. Steane had been for many years an invalid. It was not heart-disease, however, although

this had long impaired her strength, that, unless indirectly, laid her low in death. On the night of Friday, September the 26th, she experienced a stroke of paralysis, from the first severity of which she never recovered. Almost to her last breath, indeed, she retained her consciousness, and lovingly recognized the members of her family; but she never regained her power, either of speech or motion, so that any expression of her feelings, either as to her condition of suffering, or her approaching change, might become possible. In the latter respect, indeed, fondly treasured as a few—a *very* few—dying words might have been, there was no necessity for them. Her devout habits and her holy life have left a testimony, to which a triumphant deathbed, however it might have added emphasis, could have added no conviction. In a small degree communicative of her religious feelings, she evidently *lived* to the Lord; and we confidently apply to her the words we have been considering, “Blessed are the dead who *die* in the Lord.” She tranquilly breathed her soul into his hands on the morning of Tuesday, September the 30th.

My dear friend and brother, be thankful that God gave you such a companion. And you, dear children, be thankful that he gave you such a mother:

“WHOSE FAITH FOLLOW; CONSIDERING THE END OF HER  
CONVERSATION.”



## THE FINAL GATHERING.\*

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“The general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven.”—*Hebrews* xii. 23.

THE Epistle to the Hebrews—that is, to the disciples of Jesus who were of the Hebrew race—has a peculiar character, as Christianity itself assumed towards the Jewish people a peculiar position. They and their fathers had lived under a dispensation of divine institution, and observed ritual services of surpassing beauty; and they could hardly understand a system which proposed to extinguish the fire on their altar, and to overthrow the very foundation of their temple. This difficulty Paul, in this epistle, endeavours to meet. He shows how Christ, the “Son,” was superior to Moses, the “servant;” and he illustrates at large the greater excellency of the priesthood of Jesus, as compared with that of Aaron. He demonstrates, indeed, that the Jewish ritual was never so glorious as it was in its expiring moments, when its latest beams fell on the head of the present Saviour, and when, in return, it received from his cross that reflected lustre amidst the brilliance of which it was about to vanish away.

At the close of the epistle—in the interesting passage of which the text is a part—the apostle draws a comparison, or rather a blended comparison and contrast, between the Mosaic and the Christian dispensations, indicating at once the points in which they agreed, and those in which they differed. At verse 18, he says concerning believers in Jesus at large, “Ye are not come unto the mount that might”—or rather, could—“be touched.” The negative here implies a positive. The complete idea is, that, as the Israelites stood before God at Mount Sinai, there to enter into covenant with him, so believers in Jesus enter solemnly into covenant

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\* Preached at Oldham, November 9th, 1862, on occasion of the death of the Rev. John Birt.

with God as at a mount; only the mount at which Israel stood was a mount that could be touched—that is to say, it was of a tangible, or earthly, nature; whereas the mount at which believers in Jesus stand cannot be touched—it is not earthly, but spiritual. The phrase here employed by the apostle may be applied to all parts of the Jewish ritual, and is aptly expressive of its secular, or carnal, character. Their altar could be touched, their sacrifice could be touched, their priest could be touched; not so the Christian priest, or sacrifice, or altar, for all these are not carnal, but spiritual.

There was another respect in which the approach of the Israelites to God did not resemble that of believers in Jesus. They came to a mount “that burned with fire, and unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest; and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words,” which they entreated that they might hear no more (ver. 18, 19): but believers in Jesus do not draw near to God amidst terrors such as these. There was, indeed, another mount, even in Jewish history, much more characteristic of their privileged access; it was “Mount Zion” (ver. 22), on which perpetual calm and sunshine rested—a calm and sunshine sweetly emblematical of those tokens of mercy amidst which the heavenly Father receives those who approach him in Jesus.

For the secular Israel there had been provided a home—a place of social enjoyment as well as of divine fellowship—Jerusalem, “the city of the living God;” and it is the same with believers in Jesus, only they come to a better than an earthly home, to “the heavenly Jerusalem” (ver. 22).

In their approach to God the secular Israel had been associated with “angels,” by whose instrumentality, according to the apostle in another place, the ritual “law was ordained” (Gal. iii. 19), and of whom, in the language of the Psalmist (Psalm lxviii. 17), “myriads” attended the divine Majesty on Sinai; but believers in Jesus come into association with “an innumerable company of angels” (ver. 22)—with the entire angelic host, who contemplate with celestial sympathy the scheme and progress of human redemption.

To these particulars of difference and resemblance the apostle, in our text, adds another of great beauty and interest. Believers in Jesus, he tells us, “are come to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are

written in heaven." On this part of the comparison I shall offer a few further remarks.

The view that I shall take of these words is very simple. I shall regard them as exhibiting the happiness of believers in Jesus in two aspects—the former relating to this world, the latter to the world to come. The happiness, I say, of *believers in Jesus*. Dear hearer, *believest thou?* so that thou mayest say, This happiness is mine?

I. In the first place, these words present an interesting view of the happiness of believers in Jesus in the present world. It does so in two particulars.

1. In the first place they are called "the first-born." This, of course, implies that they are children, and this is the first idea that presents itself to us.

At an early period God gave this appellation to the people whom he was about to redeem. By Moses he said to Pharaoh, "Israel is my son, even my first-born" (Exodus iv. 22). And so the apostle elsewhere speaks, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26).

How sweet a thought is this! The tenderest affection which human nature knows is that of the parent's heart. A father? How much the word tells of gentle, inexhaustible, devoted love! And what an honour God has done to the parental relation to call himself by such a name! And we are *his children*! 'Tis much to be called a servant of God. Angels esteem it an honour, and even Christ himself was not ashamed of the name. It is more to be called a friend—so our Lord said to his disciples, "I call you not servants, but I have called you friends" (John xv. 15); but it is still more to be called a child. It confers a higher dignity, it breathes a more tender love.

Some children have no father. Perhaps dishonour forbids the relation to be avowed, and constrains the father to hide his head in shame; or death may have rudely rent asunder this tenderest of living ties, and left the child in this rough world an orphan. But the children of God are not fatherless.

Some children have fathers who are worse than none: perhaps a father whose vices cover his child from its very birth with disgrace, whose intemperance dooms it to poverty, or whose example leads it to crime. Not such a father have the children of God.

Some children have fathers who, possessing small means, can do little to promote their welfare, and live only to bequeath to their children the poverty and obscurity in which they were born. And the privilege which a child possesses in a father rises in proportion to the excellence of the parent's character, and the copiousness of his resources. Happy is the child who has a father of high integrity, of unblemished purity, and of expansive benevolence, so that to bear his name is a perennial honour. Happy is the child who has a father of ample wealth and extensive influence, so that his children can be well placed in the world. Happy is the child who has a father of noble descent and elevated position—perhaps of royal blood, or seated on a throne. But, O! my brethren, how all these elements of happiness vanish when compared with the felicity of those who are children of God! Of GOD—in whom, in infinite perfection, all elements combine,—of moral excellence, of material wealth, and of supreme honour. Is it *his* children we are? and are we not happy?

We have not yet arrived, however, at the whole of the apostle's idea. He says that believers in Jesus are not only God's children, but that they are his "first-born." It might almost seem as if he had here committed a mistake; for, while all first-born must be children, not all children can be first-born. The explanation, however, is this. Expressive as the term child is, the apostle felt that it came far short of a believer's actual privilege; and as there is in many cases a peculiar prerogative, not of affection only, but of title or inheritance, attached to the first-born, he takes up this element, in order to indicate that, whatever prerogative may in earthly families attach to the first-born, a similar advantage may be regarded as belonging to the whole family of God. All his children are as the first-born.

And yet it might still seem as though the apostle had fallen into an error. For is not the name and prerogative of the first-born already pre-occupied? Jesus is the first-born of the family of God, and he well deserves the honour: who among the children would take it from him? Ah! my brethren, how inadequately do we estimate the love of that tender and noble heart! It is for us he lives. What to him are honours and rewards, except as he may share them with his brethren? Or what to him the prerogative of the first-born, but that he may diffuse it among all the children?

2. In the second place, the apostle says of believers in Jesus that their names "are written in heaven."

The great promise of the Messiah, who, as the seed of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob, was to be born in one of the families of Israel, attached a peculiar importance among the Jews to family records; and accordingly great care was bestowed in entering in these records the name of every child, in order that the pedigree of any particular person might be readily and clearly ascertained. Now, as the names of the secular children of God were thus written, so the names of believers in Jesus, who are God's spiritual children, are said to be written; that is to say (taking the meaning of the metaphor), the children of God are as clearly known, and their title to a place in his family is as readily traceable, as if they were written in a household record. The difference was this: the families of Israel had their children written on earth; the true children of God "are written in heaven."

There is also this further difference. No name was placed on the register of an Israelitish family until the child was born; but the names of the children of God have been written in the heavenly record "from the foundation of the world." God's "eternal purpose and grace" is entered there, a purpose which time assuredly fulfils. And that record is of certain and unchangeable truth. No name is written there except a child's; and none once written there can ever be obliterated.

II. Let us now advert, in the second place, to the view of the believer's happiness here given by the apostle as it relates to another world. Believers in Jesus are come, he tells us, "to the general assembly and church of the first-born."

"The ear," said Elihu, one of the friends of Job, "trieth words, as the mouth tasteth meat" (Job xxxiv. 3). And the ear is assuredly not satisfied with these words as they fall upon it. "The general assembly and *church*"—this is the unsatisfactory word—"and *church* of the first-born." Now a church is either, on the one hand, a building for religious purposes, or, on the other, a company of professedly religious persons; but in neither of these senses is the word applicable to the future "general assembly of the first-born." Obviously, we want some other word to express the



true idea of the place, and our only method of finding one is to refer to the original language. Now, I do not like introducing Greek criticism into the pulpit; but I will, as urged by necessity, venture on a little now, more especially as it can be made plain to the most untaught reader of the Scriptures.

In the form of an adjective, we have in the English language the Greek word which is here translated *church*. We familiarly speak of affairs *ecclesiastical*, which every one knows are affairs belonging to the church. *Ecclesia*, then, the basis of this adjective, thus stands for church. Now *ecclesia* is a Greek word, and is the Greek word which in the text is translated *church*. It is to be observed, however, that *church* is neither the necessary, nor the primary, meaning of *ecclesia*, of which a plain and simple proof can be given without going out of the English New Testament. In the nineteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, after the account of the riot at Ephesus raised by Demetrius, the silversmith, the writer says that the town-clerk, when he had appeased the people, “dismissed the *assembly*” (Acts xix. 41)—that is, the *ecclesia*, for this is the word here employed. It is plain, then, that, in Greek, the word *ecclesia* does not necessarily mean a church in any sense; it means rather an assembly for some common object, whatever that object may be. So the riotous gathering at Ephesus was an *ecclesia*; and so persons collected at a market, or an exhibition, or for any common object, are an *ecclesia*.

Another instance of this simple use of the word *ecclesia* occurs in the seventh chapter of Acts, where our translators make Stephen speak of “the *church* in the wilderness” (Acts vii. 38). He calls the Israelites only an *ecclesia*, however—that is, an assembly having a common object; and in this sense our translators ought to have understood it.

Let us now return to our text, and avail ourselves of the result of our critical researches. We do not like the word *church*; but the word *assembly* will exactly suit us. We shall understand the apostle to speak of the “assembly of the first-born.” We know that there were such assemblies among the Israelites. Three times in every year, at the three principal festivals, were the people at large gathered together at Jerusalem, making each other glad in the city of their holy solemnities.

We seem now, however, to involve ourselves in another difficulty; as the word "assembly" occurs just before, and our text will now read—"The general assembly and assembly of the first-born." We must see, therefore, what light can be thrown on the former of these phrases.

Now the apostle has here made use of a word which also we have in English, and which in Greek has a signification at once peculiar and definite. All are acquainted with the English word *panegyric*, a word by which we mean some warm expression of praise. This is strictly a Greek word, the pronunciation only being a little altered; and in the Greek language its root (*πανήγυρις*) is used specifically to denote a particular festival, periodically celebrated by the ancient Greek republics. Either every year, or once in four years, a meeting was held of all the citizens, or persons possessing the freedom of the state, and its object was political; namely, by the association of the citizens in public amusements, to cherish their spirit of political union. At the close of these games, it was the custom for an orator to pronounce a poem composed for the occasion, in praise of the founder of the state; the poem taking its name from the name of the assembly, and being called a panegyric.

The use of this term by the apostle makes it plain beyond doubt that the idea of these pagan festivals was in his mind, and that he was combining it with the remembrance of the more familiar festivals of his own country. We shall express the whole of his thought if we say—"The general festive assembly of the first-born."

We have, then, two ideas before us: the first is that of a *general* assembly—the second that of a *festive* assembly, of the children of God. Let us look for a few moments at these.

1. There will hereafter be a "general assembly" of the children of God.

But how do we know this? And from what causes is such an assembly to arise?

The fact of its gradual formation may be understood without difficulty. Let us fix our eyes, for example, on any believer in Jesus, and trace his passage through this weary world. He may spend his days tranquilly in a single spot, or he may traverse the ocean, or wander in foreign lands; but at length he dies: and whither does he go? He goes to

Jesus, and is "with the Lord." Observe now another, whose life perhaps takes a widely different course, and terminates in a distant region: whither does he, also, go? He goes to Jesus too; and thus, in the presence of a common Saviour, they meet each other. And so with all the rest. Each finds his home with Jesus; and this common attraction brings them all together, and forms "the general assembly" of the children of God.

A general assembly, moreover, is insured by their filial and fraternal relation. Their Father has a home for them, where they must all appear. "In my Father's house," said our Lord, "are many mansions: I go to prepare a place for you" (John xiv. 2). Every mansion has its destined tenant, and will in the end be found occupied by him for whom it has been prepared. How deep a sorrow would it spread through all the house, if over even a single apartment it were written—"Not arrived. Lost in the wilderness. Perished in battle!" But no such disappointment awaits the father's love, or the brothers' hope. All shall be there—the Feebleminds and the Muchafraids, as well as the Great-hearts; for the eternal love which has conferred their title will secure their passage through every danger, and bring them in triumph home. Their names "are written in heaven," and, when the roll is read, they must personally answer to the call.

There will, then, be a "general assembly" of the children of God.\* How sweet the thought is!

How unlike will that assembly be to any condition in which the children of God have antecedently been found! Hitherto they have been necessarily spoken of as the children of God who have been "scattered abroad." Scattered all of them through the various ages of the world, the future as well as the past; while those of the same age are scattered through the various countries of the world, so that they have never been even within sight of each other: stars of the world's night few, and almost solitary, rather than by their close association creating a blaze of light in the midnight sky. Nor is it easy to bring together even those of the children of God who reside near each other, as in the same country, or even in the same town; partly, because it is impossible with certainty to discriminate them, partly, because sectarian arrangements divide them, and partly, because their

number would render the attempt futile. But herein heaven will differ from earth. There will be a "general assembly" of the first-born; a multitude "which no man can number," gathered from every age and from every nation, a multitude in which all occasions and elements of separation have disappeared for ever.

What a beautiful object such an assembly is for contemplation! A general assembly of the children of God! All the objects of his eternal love, all the ransomed by redeeming blood, then for the first time embodied in a single group, and seen as one! How noble a company, from which are severed all the abominable and the vile, and in which are united all the sanctified and the godlike, of the human race!

And how interesting and blessed a field is opened for hallowed intercourse and friendship! It is the first moment in which such a thing has been possible. In all former and partial assemblies, even of the children of God, there have been elements of discord. Scarcely could a few hundred, or a few score, of them be associated on earth, but selfishness and petulance, to say nothing of greater evils, would torment and divide them; but that is over now. Now, and for the first time, are the children of God in a condition so holy that they are fit to form a general assembly, for now all shall be peace and love eternal.

I spoke of hallowed intercourse and friendship; for it cannot be that the general assembly of the children of God shall be, as sometimes one finds in this world, a mere crowd, in which every one is a stranger, and no one knows the countenance of his neighbour. O tell me not that we shall not know each other! Nor ask me how. I admit that *that* question is unanswerable. I admit that none of the forms of human beauty with which we are now acquainted are worthy of being transferred to the celestial regions, and that none of the modes of personal recognition which are prevalent here can be conceived as existing there: but I cannot believe that the children of God, in their "general assembly," will be buried in mutual personal unacquaintedness. They were not so on earth, still less can they be so in heaven. Where there is to be love, there must be knowledge.

And, if knowledge, friendship. How perfect and ample is the preparation for it! And of the mightier heroes of our race—our first progenitor, the patriarchs, prophets, and



apostles—how rich is our introductory knowledge! To an extent not small we are acquainted with them already, and can embrace them hereafter as objects of an ancient love; while, amidst the lights of the celestial world, all human life and history may be expected to display itself with a breadth and vividness at present inconceivable. It shall assuredly be no hard matter for the children of that family to know one another.

2. Let us come now to the second thought which is before us. There is to be hereafter, not only a “general assembly,” but a “*festive assembly*,” of the children of God.

When we speak of a festive assembly, the general idea is one of gladness. And thus Isaiah speaks: “The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away” (Isaiah xxxv. 10). And, indeed, there will be many causes of gladness in that assembly.

The first cause of gladness may well be to find ourselves there. Ourselves, who have come through so much unworthiness, so many dangers, and so many fears; who have so often trembled in our weaknesses, and have all but given up the hope of arrival. But there at last! *There*, where every hope is consummated, and every fear disappointed; *there*, where toil ends in rest, and conflict in victory; *there*, where for the first time we may lay down both the pilgrim’s staff, and the warrior’s sword; *there*, with a certainty that we have fought our last battle, have shed our last tear, and have committed our last sin! Gladness indeed! ’Twere hard not to sing.

Added to the joy of finding ourselves there will be that of finding others there. Some whom we expected to find there it will be our happiness to greet; our parents, our children, our friends, our fellow-Christians—with whom, for a longer or a shorter period, we trod ~~this~~ vale of tears in hallowed company, and oft rejoiced and wept together. Though for a time, however, we lived in company, we did not—might not—die in company. Some went before into their rest, and left dear companions still treading the weary road; but there all meet again in gladness and in songs. O! what a joyous welcome each shall give, and each receive! “So, *you* are here! Thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory!”



And some, doubtless, we may greet in that assembly whom we did not expect to meet there: some who, during our residence below, were unconcerned about salvation, and were, perhaps, pursuing courses of profligacy or crime, or wandering in regions unknown to us—some of these may, in the riches of divine grace, be brought, first to Christ, and then to heaven. O what joy to meet in that “general assembly” such as these, and, clasping them in a fond embrace, to exclaim—“And *you* too?”

To these immediate sources of gladness will doubtless be added some of a more general kind. Then “the mystery of God shall be finished,” and his deep counsels be wrought out to their consummation. His elect “from the four winds of heaven” shall all have a tribute to render to his praise, and in heartfelt sympathy the whole multitude shall thrill with joy, and burst into song.

One topic only remains. In the festive gatherings at Jerusalem the high praises of Israel’s God were proclaimed in many a sacred ode. And I have mentioned that, in the political meetings of the Grecian states, there was recited in each a poem in honour of the founder. Ah! my brethren, shall there be, in the general assembly of the first-born, no song in honour of the Author of so great happiness? And who shall compose that song? Shall they summon Moses, the poet of the Exodus; or David, the lyrist of Israel; or Isaiah, the seer afar off of Messiah’s glory? Ah! needless inquiry. That song is ready to burst from every heart and every tongue. Listen to its strains. “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests to God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.”

“The general festive assembly of the first-born.” Dear hearers, which of you will be there? And, if you are not there, where will you be? There is but one gathering-place besides, and there is no gladness, but “wailing and gnashing of teeth.” Do any of you mean to be *there*?—That which confers a title to a place in “the general assembly of the first-born” is believing in Jesus. Have you felt your need of him, as a lost sinner needs a Saviour? Have you given—will you give—your hearts to him, in simple trust and loving devotedness? O listen to his call! “Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out” (John vi. 37).

Believer in Jesus! a place in "the general assembly of the first-born" is prepared for you. Ah! how often you are doubtful of it, and how you would rejoice to have your doubts cleared away! From the midst of your weaknesses and trials you look wistfully, rather than hopefully, to the final gathering. But mark the force of the apostle's language: "*Ye are come*," says he—not ye *shall* come—"ye *are* come to the general festive assembly of the first-born." Not yet in fact, for the toils and dangers of your pilgrimage as yet surround you; but by a secure and indefeasible title you are come to it. By grace your arrival is as secure as if you were already there.

And it is thither they go, our fellow-believers in Jesus, whom divine providence takes away from our circles of domestic love. "Not lost, but gone before:" added one by one to that ever-growing assembly to which we also shall, through grace, be joined, and which shall be ultimately perfected. Shall we repine that they go before us? Especially when we hope so soon to meet them again?

And thither he is gone, the senior pastor of this church, whose recent removal has clothed so many of us in weeds to-day, and of whom you will now expect from me some brief memorial.

The Rev. JOHN BIRT was the eldest son of the late Rev. Isaiah Birt, and was born at Plymouth Dock, now Devonport, of the Baptist church at which place his father was then pastor, on the 7th of January, 1787. In his early youth he removed to Coleford, in Gloucestershire, where he resided for several years, and was actively engaged in secular business. At the age of seventeen he was baptized by the Rev. W. Bradley, then pastor of the Baptist church at Coleford, of which he became a member. In his twentieth year a spirit of active piety directed his thoughts to the Christian ministry; in his twenty-first year he was engaged in preaching in the villages near Coleford; and ultimately, at the call and recommendation of the church, he relinquished business, and devoted himself entirely to ministerial work. The object of his life being thus changed, Mr. Birt spent two years in theological studies, under the direction of the late Rev. James Dore, of Maze Pond, London. At the close of this period he received a call from the church at Coleford, then

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destitute; but his first pastoral settlement took place at Hull, in the year 1812, and connected him with the church at George Street in that town, a church whom he served in love and usefulness for ten years. In 1822 he accepted a call from the Baptist church at York Street, Manchester, and the following twenty years of his life were devoted to their service, not without tokens of the divine blessing. In 1842 Mr. Birt removed to Oldham, and took the oversight of the first Baptist church in this town. His active labours here continued for fourteen years, with a large measure of success; but in 1856 they were interrupted by a paralytic seizure, from the effects of which he never so far recovered as to be able to enter the pulpit again, and only three or four times did he officiate at the Lord's table. Through six years of bodily debility was he called upon to exercise "the patience of the saints;" and he was at length released from suffering by a further seizure of the same kind, under which he gradually sank until Thursday, the 30th of October, when he "fell asleep" in his chair with so much gentleness that his death was scarcely perceptible. He died in the fiftieth year of his ministry, and the seventy-sixth year of his age.

Mr. Birt's natural characteristics were good sense, good taste, good judgment, and good temper; and out of these, under the discipline of experimental religion, grew a character eminently amiable in private, and wise in public, life. Without taking rank among the popular preachers of his day, his pulpit discourses were solid and judicious, while his pastoral deportment was attentive and affectionate, and his conduct of church affairs was orderly and gentle. The acceptableness and success of his ministry may be partially estimated from the fact, that, during the fourteen years of his active labour, about three hundred persons were baptized and added to this church by him, while many instances of the usefulness of his preaching appeared subsequently to his illness. It may be stated also, that, about the year 1853, an offset from the parent stock was planted at Mills Hill, distant about two miles, where a second church was formed of thirty-four members. To this people Mr. Birt preached once a month while his strength remained.

Happy, and conferring happiness, in domestic life, in the social circle Mr. Birt exhibited unusual conversational powers, his natural aptitude being well sustained by his large

and varied stores of general information. He was a man of public spirit, well qualified by a sound and discriminating judgment to form and to express an opinion on all the great questions of the day, a consistent Dissenter, and of liberal political sentiments. He was not, however, an eager politician. In all general religious movements—the British and Foreign Bible Society, for example—he was ready, and forward; and he took a lively and practical interest in the great struggle of British justice and benevolence with colonial slavery.

When yet a young man Mr. Birt assumed a respectable position as an author. In 1813, the year after his settlement at Hull, he put forth a small volume entitled “The Conversations of Erastus and Trophimus,” in which he vindicated “the doctrine of distinguishing grace” as maintained by the Moderate Calvinists. In 1823 he published a larger volume—“A Summary of the Principles and History of Popery;” and in 1846 a third and still larger volume, under the title of “Patristic Evenings”—a work bearing striking witness to the extent and variety of his theological reading. Besides these, a considerable number of smaller productions issued from his pen.

The main work of Mr. Birt's life, however, was the ministry of the Gospel—that noblest and most fruitful of human toils—to which he was permitted to devote himself for forty-four years without the illness of a single day, and in which he was, by divine grace, enabled to maintain a character altogether without blemish. That he did not labour without reward is already demonstrated by many proofs, and will doubtless be more fully demonstrated in the great harvest-day.

We must largely mingle gratitude with our regrets, on the termination of a life which may be regarded as having been singularly honoured and blessed; a life protracted, too, not only beyond the ordinary term of human existence, but also beyond the power of active labour; and closing so serenely—for his long evening had scarcely a cloud—amidst the tenderness of the children he had reared, and the consolations of the Gospel he had preached. He left, indeed, no dying testimony, for his palsied lips were closed; but his life had spoken—and still speaks—in terms too eloquent to need one.

On you, dear children, to whom I now, in a single word, address myself, your revered parent's instructions and example have not been lost. Let me here be permitted to express my affectionate and earnest hope, that, in "the general assembly of the first-born," not one of his family may be wanting.

Nor has he spoken in vain to you, my dear brethren, members of this church. His voice, although so long silenced, led many of you to Jesus, and as a pastor he fed you with knowledge and understanding. As you loved him on earth, see that you meet him in heaven.

But have all of you who heard him profited by his instructions? Are there none of you who heard in vain? Alas! when you meet again, as one day you will, will you constrain his words of love to testify against you? O do it not! Receive into your hearts the Saviour he preached to you, that before God you may stand with him in peace.



## BELIEVERS CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST.

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“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him.”—*Romans* vi. 6.

THE apostle states this as a fact of Christian experience. If we are believers in Christ, “our old man is crucified.”

I. Let us see, in the first place, whether we can arrive at a clear understanding of this important and interesting fact.

1. And, in order to this, let us examine the terms in which it is expressed: “our old man is crucified.”

The word to be first noticed is “man.” This cannot mean the body, neither can it mean the entire man, consisting of the body and the soul; for in neither of these respects are believers in Christ in any sense “crucified.” It must mean the moral man, or the entire group of cherished affections, impulses, and habits, of which a man, morally considered, consists. This “man” may, in a certain sense (of which we shall speak presently), be “crucified.”

Let us now examine the phrase, “our old man.” The period to which the word “old” is to be referred is the period anterior to conversion; and by a believer’s “old man” is to be understood the group of cherished affections, impulses, and habits, which characterized him before his conversion—in a single phrase, his former self.

What, then, in the last place, are we to understand by a believer’s “old man,” or his former self, being “crucified”? The language is, of course, metaphorical. It means, not that the “old man” is literally crucified, which, in fact, would be impossible, but that it is figuratively crucified; or in some respects treated as a man is who is literally crucified. Now, in the case of a crucified man there are three applicable particulars. A person crucified is, first, under present restraint; he is, secondly, in a state of progressive exhaustion; and he is, thirdly, approaching to certain death. So a believer’s old man is crucified. His former self, including

the entire group of unholy affections, impulses, and habits, which constituted his ante-christian character, is placed under present restraint; is suffering progressive exhaustion; and in the end is sure to die.

2. Having thus examined the terms in which this fact of Christian experience is expressed, let us proceed to notice some connected facts by which further light may be thrown upon it.

If a believer's "old man is crucified," this implies the existence of a new man, by whom this characteristic deed has been done. And, in truth, by faith in Christ, a new man, that is, a new character—an entirely new group of cherished affections, impulses, and habits—has been produced in the believer. His prevailing desire, love, and pursuit, are now directed to dissimilar, and even contrary, objects; "old things are passed away, and all things are become new."

It is further implied in the statement before us, that these two men, the old and the new, exist and act in the believer at one and the same time. The old does not retire before the new, neither does the new expel the old. Still has the old man, or the group of unholy affections, impulses, and habits, life and vigour; and so likewise has the new man, or the group of holy affections, impulses, and habits, which faith in Christ has produced.

It follows from the contradictory nature of these powers within a believer that they should be at deadly feud; in their operation irreconcilably contrary the one to the other, and aiming, so to speak, each at the other's extinction. Each asserting dominion for itself, thwarts, and frustrates, and would annihilate, its opposite.

In the statement before us is implied, finally, the practical superiority of the new man over the old. He is no feeble opponent. He has carried on the strife so far successfully that he has bound his antagonist, and fastened him to the cross. No longer reigning, no longer, indeed, ranging at large in the enjoyment of his liberty, the old man is now crucified; the new-born group of holy affections, impulses, and habits, possessing a power and energy altogether superior, and constituting a permanent supremacy.

The fact of Christian experience here stated by the apostle is thus brought fully before us, and is sufficiently intelligible.

II. But now, in the second place, let us inquire upon what grounds the statement rests. Whence does it appear that, in a believer in Christ, the old man is crucified?

First, from a believer's likeness to his Lord. "Our old man," says the apostle, "is crucified with Christ;" or, as from the context the meaning seems to be, like Christ.

If the former part of the chapter be attentively considered, there will be found running through the whole of it the idea that a general resemblance prevails between Christ and believers in him, and the resemblance is brought out in several particulars. Thus, in the act of Christian profession, we are said to be "baptized into his death," or in resemblance of his death; and, by this baptism in resemblance of death, we are said to be "buried with him," or like him; while our rising to a new life is "like as Christ was raised from the dead" (ver. 3, 4).

And, as this likeness to Christ is indicated by the act of Christian profession, so it is characteristic of Christian experience. Christ was crucified, and so are those who believe in him; he literally, they in a figure—exhibiting, not an identity, but a similarity. And since this similarity prevails and is to be maintained, as Christ was crucified so must believers be. "Our old man is crucified, like Christ."

Secondly, from the natural tendency and inevitable influence of faith.

Faith in Christ is primarily the instrument of a sinner's justification, that by which he attains deliverance from condemnation, and peace with God: but the operation of faith does not stop here; it has an energy much beyond this. "Faith," says the apostle, "worketh," and it "worketh by love." It implies love to God, which is the essential element of reconciliation to him. It immediately generates love to Christ, a love so deep, and tender, and strong, as to become, at once and for ever, the ruling passion of heart and life. And love to Christ is identical with hatred of sin; the latter is but another form of the same passion. Hence it is that a believer in Jesus, while enjoying the full gladness of a perfect peace with God through atoning blood, immediately enters into conflict with his former self, and, in the strength of divine grace, overcomes. His old man is crucified. Viewed in the light of the cross, every sin becomes intolerably hateful to him, and there is none which, animated by love to

Christ, he cannot resist and vanquish. Sweetly is this expressed by the chief of the sweet singers of Israel:—

“O! how I hate those lusts of mine  
That crucified my God;  
Those sins that pierced and nailed his flesh  
Fast to the fatal wood!

“Yes, my Redeemer, they shall die,  
My heart has so decreed;  
Nor will I spare the guilty things  
That made my Saviour bleed.

“Whilst, with a melting, broken heart,  
My murdered Lord I view,  
I'll raise revenge against my sins,  
And slay the murderers too.”

III. Such are the grounds on which the statement of the apostle rests. Let us now, in the third place, gather up the instruction to be derived from it. “Knowing this,” that a believer's old man is crucified with Christ, we may learn several very important things.

1. In the first place, here is supplied to us a critical test of our character. Here is something which will enable us to answer the question—Are we Christians indeed?

In *name* we are all Christians; but, of course, we are all too well informed to attach any importance to this circumstance. The essential matter, and it is a widely different matter, is to be a Christian indeed. Perhaps we think we believe in Jesus, and hope that we have peace with God through his blood; but even this is a matter which should be put to the test, inasmuch as faith is to be known by its fruits. And our subject supplies a test in all respects apt and conclusive. If you are a believer in Christ, dear reader, your old man, your former self, is, as he was, crucified. Is this a fact? Have you any consciousness of a new life within you, of a set of cherished affections, impulses, and habits, widely different from your old ones, and in practical antagonism to them? Have new-born holy affections and purposes entered into resolute conflict with your old man, and asserted a practical supremacy? Is your old man, in a word, *crucified*; not only placed under immediate restraint, but in a course of gradual exhaustion, and in a way to die? Is it your aim, your purpose, your hope, that he *shall* die?

There ought to be no difficulty in answering these questions. They do not relate to anything recondite or obscure. Such matters as these must lie upon the surface of your consciousness, and be immediately open to a careful inquiry. Let me entreat you to make the inquiry both carefully and faithfully, for it is of infinite importance to have a correct answer. If your old man is not crucified, you have no true faith in Jesus: you know nothing of the reality of religion.

In such circumstances, dear reader, it is plainly necessary that you should bestir yourself; for, if you live and die without religion, you are lost for ever. But what will you do? Will you set about the correction of your unholy passions and evil habits? Alas! to what end? and by what means? There being no new man within you, the crucifixion of the old man will be impossible, and all your present purposes will speedily be frustrated. No. Rather come as a poor helpless sinner to Jesus, who is able to save to the uttermost. Faith in his name will, in the first instance, give you peace with God; and then it will create in you that holy power of love to Christ, before which every sin shall droop and die. The new man brought into being, the old will soon be crucified.

2. In the second place, the statement of the apostle supplies to us a satisfactory solution of some of the perplexities of Christian experience.

Often is it the lamentation of the believer in Jesus, "The good that I would I do not, but the evil that I would not that I do." His desires and purposes of piety are but very imperfectly fulfilled; they seem to be strangely thwarted by some adverse power within him. He could sometimes fancy that he is more like two persons than one, and these two at perpetual strife. And in some sense it is so. Morally he is not one, but two persons. The affections, impulses, and habits of his unconverted state constitute one person, and those of his converted state constitute another; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that he cannot, without opposition, do the things that he would. The facts being thus understood, however, the whole case is explained, and there is no longer any mystery. The inward strife is no proof of the absence of religion, but rather of its presence, if to such effect it is carried on that the "old man is crucified." It would be a much more fatal sign if all within were peace.



3. In the third place, the statement of the apostle supplies us with an instructive practical view of the Christian's life. He is (if we may be allowed the expression) an executioner; a person employed in conducting a process of crucifixion, and this process is accomplished upon himself. He is habitually crucifying his old man.

What a life of sadness and of pain! In part this is true; and it is not to be supposed that any process fairly, even by a figure, to be called crucifixion, can be carried on without pain: but, as it is a pain which is necessary and inevitable on the one hand, so, on the other, it is a pain not unassociated with a Christian's highest pleasures. The process, indeed, whatever may be the suffering occasioned by it, is essential to his happiness. Love to Jesus cannot tolerate the presence of his murderers; and never is a Christian's communion with his Lord so sweet as when the crucifixion of the old man goes on most vigorously.

It is evident, however, that, if a Christian's life be such, it can by no means be one of indolence or inattention. If our former self is to be effectually crucified, it is plain that it must be in the perpetual exercise of watchfulness, self-control, and self-denial. Without these the old man may, every now and then, peradventure, come down from the cross, and "play strange antics before high heaven." Never, Christian, should your watchful eye be closed, nor the hand of restraint be relaxed. Your eye should not spare, nor your heart pity, although the crucified one be yourself in its dearest form. Let the love of Christ constrain you. View your corruptions always in the light of his cross. Set your sins before your eyes as those which crucified your Lord, and take on them the grateful revenge for which love, ever newly kindled, cannot but nerve you.

4. In the last place, the statement of the apostle suggests to us a blessed and animating hope.

For if, through grace, our old man is now crucified, he will some time expire. The process of crucifixion, however slow it may be, is not one of suffering merely, but one of death, which comes at last no less surely than if it came suddenly. Such, thanks be to God! shall the end of the crucifixion of our old man be. Even while we tarry upon earth we trust to witness his declining strength, and his perceptible approaches to death; but with our dying breath

his life finally, and for ever, expires. O blessed thought! This forced companionship with the murderers of our beloved Lord is not to last for ever. No more of it beyond the grave! None of it in glory! Jesus alone shall dwell in our hearts there, greeted evermore by hallowed and ardent affections all his own! O let us not fail in carrying on a process, however laborious, or however painful, which is to have an issue so delightful!

## ON LOVE TO GOD.

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“Them that love God.”—*Romans viii. 28.*

THIS phrase is part of an interesting and familiar passage, in which the apostle employs love to God as a distinctive characteristic of true piety. “For we know,” says he, “that all things work together for good to them that love God.” Without adverting further to the context, we may not unprofitably employ ourselves for a few moments in meditating on this important spiritual grace.

Love to God—What is it? And what is its place in the Christian character? Answers to these two questions will bring out our present thoughts.

First, Love to God—what is it?

More simply, what is love? It is an affection so universally felt that it ought to be easily understood. It is surely delight in a person; kindness towards a person; and devotedness to a person: in other words, it is complacency, benevolence, and consecration. And such is love to God.

1. Love to God is delight in his character. Not, however, in such a character as we may happen to ascribe to God; since, either by ignorance or perverseness, we may possibly form an idea of God which is very remote from the truth. Many people do form a God after their own hearts, and then, with this creature of their imagination before them, fancy that they love him. Real delight in the character of God, however, implies that he is truly known; known as he is revealed, not in his works merely, but in his Word, and in his Son. To love God is to rejoice in the glorious attributes which compose his being, and more especially in his moral attributes, which may be summed up in one word—his holiness. The reader will recollect with what solemn emphasis it is declared, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty.” Now to love God is to find in this his character

what gives us pleasure, what inspires the highest thoughts of his excellency, and leads us to revere him, and adore.

2. Love to God is acquiescence in his government. For God has established a government over us, by means of a holy, just, and righteous law, having issues of everlasting joy or sorrow. Even in his exercise of mercy he proceeds upon principles of equity, and makes righteousness and peace embrace each other. To love him is cordially to acquiesce in this his method of action; to sympathize with his claim of authority, to confess the righteousness of his law, and to rejoice in the honour which it receives in the cross of his Son. It is to be at one with him, without controversy or discontent, in all the aspects and bearings of his moral government; the principles on which it is founded, the rules by which it is administered, and the issues in which it will be consummated.

3. Love to God is devotedness to his interest. For he has a cause in the world which he is carrying on by methods which admit of our co-operation, and in which he condescends to require our aid. Our example, our conversation, our influence, and our activity in a thousand ways, may help its advancement; and he permits it in a measure to lean upon us. To love him is cheerfully to accept this calling, to enter into the spirit of the position in which he has placed us, and, in a spirit of self-renunciation, to live for God.

This is a brief, but, perhaps, a sufficient answer to our first question: let us now proceed to the second.

Secondly, Love to God—what is its place in the Christian character?

In answering this question we shall find a few words to say—first, on its production; secondly, on its manifestation; thirdly, on its value; and, finally, on its nurture.

1. In speaking of the production of love to God in the heart of fallen man, it is obvious to observe that, antecedently to conversion, he is a total stranger to it. The Scripture declares that men are, as unrenewed, “enemies in their mind” to God; a fact too plainly shown by their “wicked works.” And this is manifest, indeed, by a comparison of the actual feelings of men with all the aspects of God’s being and ways which are fitted to engage love. They have no delight in his character; unless it be in the fictitious character which their own hearts have given him—that of

an easy Deity, who takes little notice of their conduct, and will indulge them with impunity in all manner of disorders. Such a being they could love ; but a God who "is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity," who "is angry with the wicked every day," and will ultimately "turn the wicked into hell," for such a one they feel rather aversion than complacency.

And unrenewed men are not less displeased with the government of God than with his character. They think it hard that he should claim to govern, while, in their opinion, his law is a great deal too strict, and his punishments too severe. They are petulant at this crossing of their own will, and resent the interference of divine government as an unwarrantable and intolerable intrusion on their proper liberty. "Our tongues," and our hands, they say, "are our own ; who is lord over us?"

Nor is the interest of God in this world at all attractive to unrenewed men. To them it is much more agreeable to revel in sensual indulgences, to riot in scenes of pleasure, or to pursue a course of profit or ambition, than to lend themselves in a spirit of devotedness to the diffusion of the Gospel, and the renovation of the world. Whether they eat or drink, or whatsoever they do, it is for their own enjoyment, and not for "the glory of God."

How, then, it is to be asked, is this state of things altered, and so great a change brought about as that the enemies of God should become his friends, and those who hated him learn to love ?

The answer to this question is to be found in the words of the apostle, that God "hath appeared in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." Sending his only-begotten and well-beloved Son into the world to make himself an offering and sacrifice of expiation for sin, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," God has assumed an attitude towards men appealing to them with unspeakable power, and well-fitted to transform enmity into friendship. If it be a truth of man's nature that love begets love, how should not love so unparalleled as this subdue his heart to God ? It is true that man's stony heart is obdurate, but it is true also that this is God's chosen means for softening it, and that the adaptation of it is perfect and complete. It is true, likewise, that, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, this is the actual means by which a sinner's heart is



reconciled to God, and the enemy converted into a friend. Submission to Christ as God's salvation may be regarded as the first expression of friendship towards God himself; a proof and indication that enmity no longer prevails, but has given place to love. "We love him because he first loved us."

2. Such is the process by which love to God is generated in man's heart; let us now see in what modes it is manifested.

These modes are many, and all of them are characteristic; but we may specify a few.

Love to God manifests itself by a desire for his company. So, in earthly things, the loving one desires the company of the loved. He that loves God loves communion with him, whether by meditation merely, or, more formally, by prayer; he loves the sacred retirement where God's presence may be most vividly realized, and the social exercises by which the devout affections may be most powerfully awakened. His saddest hours are those in which God is most absent from his thoughts, and his brightest those in which he walks with him in most intimate companionship.

Love to God manifests itself by a desire after his love. So human love desires return, and love unrequited recoils on the heart that cherishes it with a death-like coldness. How unspeakably sad were the heart that loves God, if there might be no hope of responding love! The breathing of its intense desire is, "My Father, love me; and shed abroad thy love in my breast!" To be loved is not less a necessity of happiness than to love.

Love to God manifests itself by a desire after his likeness. There is always an aptness to imitate the character we admire, and sometimes this transforming influence of love is very powerful. Love to God generates earnest longings after growing, and even complete, conformity to him. It is on an agreement of moral temperament that the very possibility of love rests, and the height to which it can be carried is proportioned to the degree of assimilation. "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." O! to be more like him! Then we can love him more, and shall be more beloved.

Love to God manifests itself by a desire to please him. To a loving heart "his commandments are not grievous." To have something to do for one whom we love supplies us

with one of our greatest luxuries ; and he that loves God is "he that hath his commandments and keepeth them." And the promptness and fidelity with which this is done are equally characteristic. One who truly loves God will be able to say, "I made haste, and delayed not, to keep thy commandments."

Dear reader, here are plain evidences. Will you now ask yourself whether you love God or not ?

3. What, now, let us ask, in the third place, is the value of this grace ?

And to this question we may answer, that love to God is a critical and decisive evidence of piety. It is an affection so totally opposite to the state of the carnal heart, that its existence cannot be accounted for but on the supposition of an entire change ; and the change implied is such as only a melting view of God in Christ could have produced. Assuredly, "he that loveth God" has "passed from death unto life."

Love to God is pre-eminent among the Christian graces. Of hope, joy, peace, and all the group, it may be said that love, like an elder sister, "strengthens all the rest ;" or rather, that love is the parent of them all. Indeed, there is a view in which it may be said that all the graces are essentially love. What is faith, but love bowing at the cross ? What is hope, but love winged with expectation ? What is joy, but love in transport ? or patience, but love under tribulation ? or trust, but love in contemplation of the promise ? These are rather changes of circumstance and condition than changes in the affection of the mind, which, through all, is one and the same. Thus religion may be said to be wholly love. How like to God himself ! For "God is love ;" and so are his children too.

Love to God is the great source of pleasure in religion. The affection of love, more especially of requited love, is itself a gladness, and it infuses gladness into all which it inspires. Thus love to God is a perennial spring of joy in the Christian's heart, and it makes, if not all his religion joyous, yet the principal joyousness of his religion. It makes glad the season of devout fellowship ; it makes glad the duties of holy obedience ; it makes glad the activities of a consecrated life ; it makes glad the exercise of self-denial ; it makes glad the bearing of the cross.

Love to God is the mainspring of Christian energy. I do not mean to represent it as the only motive by which the Christian is actuated; it is, however, the motive of most constant application, and of greatest power. Love is well known to be the commanding principle in human character, and among the multitude of human feelings the predominant and supreme. Such is love to God in the experience of the Christian. Where hope, or fear, or sense of duty, might fail, love will assuredly triumph. Attaching importance to every one of God's commandments, and in obedience at once prompt and faithful, it generates a perseverance unwearied, and laughs difficulties to scorn. Its life is to do, to suffer, and to endure, for God and his glory.

Love to God is the restoration of man's primary virtue. Before man fell this was his attitude—he loved God; and to the same attitude he is by grace restored. Man is thus recovered to himself, and to the lost image of his Maker. Not all the other graces of the Christian character, apart from love to God, would accomplish such a result; but, loving God, man is again, in the noblest sense, himself—himself, as if he had never fallen.

Love to God, although produced under the mediatorial system, is separable from it, and capable of an independent existence. We know that the mediatorial system, however glorious in itself, and now indispensable, is not to exist for ever. After the final judgment, and the glorification of the saints, the Lord Jesus Christ will give up the kingdom to the Father, "that God may be all in all." The work of redemption completed, its machinery will no longer be perpetuated, and the redeemed will have immediate access to God. Under these circumstances how many graces will expire! Faith, in direct acceptance, and hope, in full fruition; while love to God, emancipated from all shackles, and transported into a new region, survives for immortality. "Now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

4. Such being the value of love to God, let us ask, finally, What are the means of its nurture?

If, indeed, we love God, we are deeply conscious that we love him too little; and it ought to be our desire and endeavour to love him more. It is yours, Christian reader, is it not? And you would like to be informed how so important an object can be attained. Remember, then, these things.

Love grows with knowledge—with knowledge, that is to say, of the object beloved. What infinite stores of loveliness are there in God still unappreciated by you! God in Christ! What an object for your habitual contemplation! And every beauty of his character which you newly discern, or more largely realize, will inflame your love to a higher intensity.

Love grows with intercourse. If you would love God much, have much communion with him. Be often in the secret place of piety, and give time—sufficient time—to the cultivation of this kindling fellowship. You would not love an earthly friend very ardently, if you had only occasional and momentary converse with him; nor, with unfrequent and perfunctory converse with God, can your love to him be fervent.

Love grows with likeness. As it is in the first instance love to God which transforms us into his likeness, so every measure in which we become like him increases our aptitude to love him more. “If we walk in the light, as he is in the light,” we shall not only “have fellowship” with him, but a fellowship of ever-advancing intimacy and sweetness.

Love grows with service. We love those most for whom we do most. Ask the devoted mother which of her children she loves best. It is assuredly the pining and sickly one, who has occupied both her days and her nights with wakeful and laborious attentions. In like manner, if you do much for God you will be sure to love him much. Your labour will bring your love, otherwise slumbering, into conscious action; while your presentation of it as a token of gratitude before his feet, will bring a response of love from him by which your love will be still further inflamed.

May God grant you, dear reader, to abound in this grace! How fitted it is for earth, where toils require all its energy, and grief all its gladness! How fitted it is for heaven, where the object of your love shall appear in all his glory, and his response of love kindle your glowing breast to a seraphic ardour!

## CHRIST OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

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“Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us . . . righteousness.”  
—1 Cor. i. 30.

WITHOUT troubling the reader with the connexion of this passage, important and interesting as it is, we will beg him to direct his undiverted thoughts to the great subject which the text presents to him. Here is one grand aspect of God's interposition of mercy for a ruined world. In his infinite grace and wisdom, “Christ Jesus is made unto us righteousness.”

With this passage before us, our first business will be to ascertain the meaning of it. In what sense is Christ made to us righteousness? He is a teacher of righteousness, say some, and this is true; he was an example of righteousness, say others, and this also is true; but neither of these apart, nor both of them together, will satisfy the language employed. For Christ to be made righteousness to us, is surely more than his being our teacher and example.

In order to see our way a little further into this subject, it should be observed that the word righteousness is used in two senses; sometimes to denote a moral righteousness, and sometimes a legal righteousness. These two phrases relate respectively to two systems of things from which they emanate. There is a system of essential right, of right determined by an absolute and unchangeable rule which is to be found in the nature of God, and conformity to this rule is moral righteousness; there is also a system of prescribed right, of right expressed in commandments, embodied in law, and enforced by retributive sanctions, and obedience to this law is legal righteousness. It is for us, then, to ascertain in which of these senses the word righteousness is used in the passage before us.

It is held by some that the apostle here refers to moral righteousness; so that, when Christ is said to be our right-



eousness, the meaning is that he is to us, in some way, the source of holiness. There is, however, an argument close at hand to show that this cannot be so. The whole verse reads thus—"Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and *sanctification*, and redemption." Now the word "sanctification" must of necessity be understood of moral righteousness; and, as one cannot impute a mere tautology to the apostle, no meaning remains for the word "righteousness" but that of legal righteousness.

Now, since Christ is made to us legal righteousness, it evidently follows that we are placed under a system of administration to which legal righteousness belongs; and, in order to appreciate, or even to understand, the privilege thus expressed, it will be necessary to pay some attention to the character and bearing of that system itself.

1. We are, then, placed by the sovereign will of our Maker under a system of law. A law is expressly given by him to us, in the words—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart . . . and thy neighbour as thyself" (Matt. xxii. 37-39); and in the epistle to the Romans (ii. 6-16), the apostle Paul tells us that God "will render to every man according to his deeds," "in the day when he shall judge the secrets of men."

2. Now, under a system of law, the necessary and only condition of well-being is obedience, or righteousness. This follows inevitably from the principle laid down, that God "will render to every man according to his deeds." According to the apostle in another place (Rom. vi. 23), "The wages of sin is death." Regularly administered, a law knows nothing of overlooking offences, or of forgiving them. It maintains and protects the social position of those who obey it, and of none besides. Under a system of law, therefore, righteousness is, as I have said, the necessary and only condition of well-being.

3. In point of fact, however, our well-being under the law of God is already forfeited by our manifold transgressions. We have in a thousand instances broken it, and as violators of it we are under its curse; a curse which constitutes the most awful element of our misery, and from which it is our most urgent interest to escape. But *can we escape?* As we have just seen, the only possible condition of our well-being is our *righteousness*; yes, let us repeat it, in some way or other we must possess righteousness, or we are lost!

4. Is this possible, however? And, if it be possible, in what method can it be effected?

To these questions we must, in the first instance, answer frankly, that *in our own persons* it is absolutely impossible. We are sinners, and we never can undo our many deeds of transgression, or any one of them. If our being righteous is possible at all, it must be in the person of another.

"The person of another!" my reader, perhaps, exclaims; and adds, "Surely that can never be." So by many it has been thought, and two apparently forcible objections to the idea have been adduced, at both of which we must briefly glance.

On the one hand, we are told that it is impossible we should be righteous in the person of another, because actions cannot be transferred. In the nature of things, it is said, our sins always must be our own, and the righteousness of another must always be his. Now we admit this to be perfectly true, and we should feel the bearing of it against us if we held that actions, whether evil or good, were transferred. We have nothing to do, however, with any such notion. What we are dealing with is not actions, but the consequences of actions—the punishment of sin, and the reward of obedience. Now, although actions cannot be transferred, it is quite manifest that the *consequences* of actions may. If one commits a robbery, and is sentenced to transportation for it, although another cannot commit the robbery, he may undergo the transportation. In like manner, although our sins never can become actually Christ's, nor his obedience ours, he may bear the desert of our iniquities, and we may enjoy the reward of his obedience. This objection, therefore, that actions cannot be transferred, does not apply.

Then, on the other hand, we are told that God, as a righteous governor, is required to deal with every man for his own transgressions, and cannot, by the essential principles of his government, be allowed to put another in the transgressor's stead. But we are not sure that this, however plausible, is true; and, at any rate, we cannot admit it without examination. We are liable to get contracted notions on this point, perhaps from our habit of contemplating the position of an earthly judge, who certainly has necessarily to deal with the actual law-breaker, and with no

one besides; but it should be recollected that an earthly judge possesses only a delegated authority, and is by it strictly bound to administer the law as it is put into his hands, while the sovereign in whose name he acts possesses a certain discretionary power, and is able to some extent to override the proceedings of the judge, as in the familiar case of a royal pardon. Now, in our case God is at the same time judge and sovereign; and, within certain limits, he can modify the administration of his own law.

That which it is necessary for him to maintain is not the strict bearing of his law on the actual transgressors of it, but the honour of the law itself, and the unblemished character of his government. If, consistently with these, any merciful modification of legal process should be found possible, it is quite competent to him to permit it.

5. The question is thus reduced from one of possibility to one of wisdom. The introduction of another person into the judicial proceedings, one to be dealt with in the place of, and as a substitute for, the actual transgressor, need not be refused if suitable conditions can be arranged; that is to say, if, on the one hand, an apt and adequate substitute can be found, and if, on the other, a mode of rendering his suretyship available can be hit upon which shall include the germ of a renovated character.

The question is, no doubt, a difficult and profound one; but, treating it hypothetically, it is not absolutely impracticable.

One can see, for example, some of the principal qualifications which a substitute in this case must possess. In the first place, he must be a man; a being of the same nature as the transgressor, a member of the race which has sinned—only so can he be a fitting representative of them. In the next place, he must be a man free from the moral taint which attaches to the race; one of human kind, yet not a descendant of Adam; a member of the race thrown into it from some external source. In the third place, he must be a man, as of innocent nature, so of holy life, and in all practical obedience unblamable—not himself a sinner. And, in the fourth place, he must be more than man; having some superhuman dignity attached to his nature, which shall give to his obedience unto death a meritorious and expiatory character, far higher than could belong to that of a mere

man; inasmuch as he will stand in the stead, not only of many men, but of many millions of men, and must in himself be an equivalent for the whole world.

And, with respect to the second point, the discovery of a condition which should provide for the renovation of the sinner's character, one can see that the actual efficacy of this merciful arrangement might be made dependent on the cultivation of a state of mind out of which a new life would certainly grow.

6. Thus looked at hypothetically, it is perceptible that the case is not absolutely intractable; what is wanted being some one of wisdom and power enough to devise and execute the requisite means. How far this work transcends human wisdom and power we need not say; but, happily, we know how all these difficulties have been met and overcome in the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the doctrine of salvation through faith in his name.

See what he is as a substitute for our guilty race. First, he is "one chosen out of the people," "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh." Next, he is without spot; the "seed of the woman," indeed, but, even as to his human nature, "the Son of God." Then, his life was as perfect as his nature was pure, and his entire obedience without a flaw. While, in the last place, his true divinity gives to his person a glory, and to all his doings and sufferings a value, which surpasses the salvation of a thousand worlds. The substitute, therefore, is found.

And now for the condition on which his substitution shall be made available, a condition to unite the claims of grace and holiness; to make salvation as free as our lost estate requires, and as purifying as the government of God demands. Behold it in the proclamation of salvation by faith! Now faith in this connexion may be explained as an act of acquiescence in, or of submission to, God's method of mercy. It is the simple acceptance of that which is simply given. Salvation cannot be more free. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." And the acceptance of God's mercy thus exercised is the first fruit of a state of mind entirely new, and certainly productive of a holy life. If the enemy were not changed to a friend, God's method of mercy never would have been submitted to; and, if the enemy is turned to a friend, the fruits of friendship will assuredly follow in their season.



It is in this manner, then, that "Christ is of God made unto us righteousness." Under a system of government by law, we as transgressors are liable to condemnation; and our happiness cannot be secured but by our becoming legally righteous, which in our own persons is impossible. God, then, in his infinite mercy, places his own Son in our room, to be dealt with as though he had committed our sins, while we shall be dealt with as though we had wrought his righteousness. This arrangement being made, Christ is sent forth into the world; by his obedience unto death he magnifies the law, and makes it honourable; he bears our sins in his own body on the tree, and redeems us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. Thus God makes him to be sin [treats him as a sinner] for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God [treated as righteous by God] in him. This righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ, is unto all, and upon all, them that believe. (Isaiah xlii. 21; 1 Peter ii. 24; Gal. iii. 13; 2 Cor. v. 21; Rom. iii. 22.)

Let us now endeavour to make some practical improvement of the subject.

1. How necessary it is to the appreciation, and even to the understanding, of Gospel privileges, that we should distinctly feel, and deeply realize, the antecedent misery to which they correspond! What can we know about Christ as our righteousness, unless we know also, and feel, too, our condition under the obligation and the curse of the law? Vague and obscure views on this point have a tendency to vitiate, or enfeeble, the whole of experimental religion, and, in all probability, they lie at the root of much of its practical instability. Let the reader ask himself—Do I know and feel my condition as a creature, under government by law? Do I know and feel my condition as a sinner, under the curse of law? Do I know and feel my need as a breaker of law, not of pardon merely, but of righteousness?

2. After the view we have taken, how clearly and simply the way of salvation shows itself! If with any fitting anxiety we ask the question, "What must I do to be saved?" we see at once what the reply *cannot* be. It will not answer our need to say, Pray to God, for he is merciful; for what we want is *righteousness*. It will not answer our need to say, Improve your morals, and attend to your religious duties; for what we want is *righteousness*. Nothing can



answer our need till we see "the righteousness of God," or God's way of making us righteous; and then there is nothing to be done but to bow to it, and accept it. O sinner, lost and helpless! behold "the righteousness of God"! In what manner does your heart respond to it? Do you shrink from it in pride, or turn aside in self-righteous confidence? Will you prefer to trust in prayers, in tears, in names, in ceremonies, in deeds of virtue or of charity? Or, with yielding heart, do you rather say with an apostle, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith"? (Phil. iii. 7-9.)

3. How complete and blessed is the provision which divine mercy has made for our need! As breakers of law we want a righteousness; and, behold, God in adequate compassion has provided one—a righteousness which he himself has devised, which his well-beloved Son has wrought, and which his government in its most solemn transactions will own. How completely, whatever may have been our guilt, are our relations with the divine government reduced to order and peace! The law, once so angry, demands no more. No longer do we hear thunders of wrath, or charges of transgression. "Who is he that condemneth? It is God that justifieth" (Rom. viii. 32). In the midst of God's holy universe we stand not charged with sin, for "Christ is of God made unto us righteousness."

4. How distinguished is our privilege as believers in Jesus! O! it had been much, if, like holy angels, we could have walked in clean garments, in garments which had never received a stain; but it is more—ininitely more—to be arrayed in the robe of Jesus' righteousness. So bright a garment angels never wore; and with adoring love should rebellious mortals wear the righteousness of an incarnate God!

5. How lively should be our gratitude! When we look at the love thus shown to us, and try with our poor thoughts to measure it, we soon find that it passeth knowledge; but, at least, in the little measure in which it can be known, it should be influential. Does not the consideration of it waken our hearts to thankfulness? What are we going to be, to

do, for him who hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for us? Alas! our indolence and apathy! shall they not be crucified at his cross? Shall we accept so vast a gift, and make no return?

“In vain our mortal voices strive  
To speak compassion so divine;  
Had we a thousand lives to give,  
A thousand lives should all be thine.”

Consider, too, dear reader, that out of your very possession of righteousness by Christ springs an obligation of great weight to holiness of life. Your submission to God's method of mercy implies that your heart is no longer at enmity with him, but is reconciled at once to him and to his government. Your faith in Christ is the first expression of your reconciled spirit; but, assuredly, it ought not to be, and it cannot be, the last. It cannot stand by itself, but must be the starting point of a new course of holy living. You must not, cannot, resume your former course of rebellion; you will rather endeavour to be holy, as God is holy. Herein, indeed, will be the critical test of your faith, which is no faith, but a name only, if it do not purify your heart, and regulate your life. O happy one to whom “Christ is of God made righteousness”! see to it that you have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but that you perfect holiness in the fear of God!

## THE INWARD EVIDENCE.

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“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.”—*1 John* v. 10.

IN dealing with this very interesting and important passage of Scripture, it will be necessary for us in the outset to arrive at a correct conception of its meaning.

No difficulty attaches to it except in connexion with one word, “the witness;” and, in order to find the meaning of this word, we must trace it in the context. The passage begins at verse 7; and reads as follows:—

“7. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one. 8. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one. 9. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness which he hath testified of his Son. 10. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record which God gave of his Son. 11. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.”

We observe, on reading these verses, that two words—“record,” and “witness,”—are employed. Only one word is here used in the original, and it would have been better if our translators had used but one word, as the thing intended is one and the same. The word testimony, indeed, suits the connexion better than either witness, or record, and I shall hereafter employ it.

The apostle, then, writes thus:—There are in heaven three that bear testimony to Christ, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; there are also on earth three that bear testimony to Christ, the spirit, the water, and the blood: and this testimony is, that God hath given to us eternal life, and that this life is given through his Son. Now, this testimony ought to be received, because it appeals to us on the same ground as human testimony, which we habitually receive, even

when far less ample and decisive: but, apart from this, he that believeth on the Son of God hath the testimony in himself.

What, now, can be the meaning of the word "testimony" in this last phrase? It cannot be God's testimony itself which a believer on the Son of God has within him, for that is a thing obviously and necessarily without him. The word testimony seems to be here used in the sense of evidence; so that the meaning will be, He that believeth on the Son of God hath in himself evidence that what he accepts as the testimony of God concerning his Son is truly so.

The question thus raised is a very momentous one: it is that of the truth and divine origin of Christianity; it is whether what we hold as such is really the testimony of God concerning his Son. For us it is of infinite importance that it should be so, for this fact lies at the foundation of all our peace. If this testimony should, unhappily, prove to be either false or fictitious, the whole fabric of our hope falls into ruin.

Now, the question respecting the truth and divine origin of Christianity is, of course, to be decided by evidence; and the evidence applicable to it is of various kinds. Concerning the testimony which we are told God has given of his Son, it may be inquired in what manner God has given it; by what persons it has been communicated; by what deeds their mission was authenticated; in what records it has been transmitted to us; what is its moral tone, and what have been its practical effects.

Concerning the evidence thus briefly sketched there may be made some important general observations. The field of inquiry is obviously, as a whole, very large; nor can any of its separate divisions be said to be even of moderate dimensions. Each, indeed, may well be regarded as requiring several volumes, and the whole a library. We have to begin with the great subjects of revelation and inspiration; then to weigh the character and credibility of the sacred writers: after that to discuss the nature and credibility of prophecy and miracles; then to range over the vast field of biblical criticism; then to test, in multiplied instances, the morality of the Bible; and, last of all, to trace its footsteps in the history of mankind.

Besides being a very large, the Christian evidences are also a very difficult, subject of study. The mastery of it

demands a vast amount of information, such as can be acquired only by long and extensive reading; it demands also great attainments in learning, meaning hereby chiefly a critical knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages, but including also a knowledge of what commentators in many languages, and in many ages, have written; and it demands, finally, a well-balanced and highly-cultivated mind, qualified, both by education and by practice, to do justice to minute questions of criticism, and to weigh with candour moral arguments. The study of the Christian evidences becomes the more difficult now, because of the great distance of time at which we are from the occurrence of the chief facts involved, of the wide diversity between ancient and modern modes of life, and of the critical embarrassments resulting from the transmission through so many hands, and so many ages, of ancient manuscripts. And the difficulty is further aggravated by the fact that a host of unbelievers have traversed the field before us, raising up innumerable objections, more or less weighty, and often presenting them with ingenious plausibility, though with a culpable perverseness.

To these considerations it may be added, that the mastery of the Christian evidences must clearly be a work of time. Several years of continuous study is the shortest time that could possibly be allotted to it; and the whole of a long life would not be too much to be devoted to it.

From these observations it inevitably results that, in relation to the bulk of mankind, these evidences are almost, if not altogether, useless. It is little to say that not one in a thousand—it should rather be said not one in a million—of the hearers of the Gospel possesses, either the learning, or the general knowledge, or the mental culture, or the leisure time, required for the study of them.

And we may now be struck, perhaps, by a corresponding fact; namely, that the mastery of the Christian evidences is not in any instance made the basis of God's appeal to mankind. The commission of our Lord to his disciples was not, Go and explain to the people the evidences that you bring a divine message; but, Go and proclaim the message itself: "Go ye, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned." How absurd it would have been to find the apostles saying to their auditors, "Come, and let



us sit down to the study of the Pentateuch, that we may settle its historical character, and ascertain whether it was written by Moses." A long while indeed it would have been, on such a plan, before the Gospel would have been preached to the nations, and a still longer time before any had believed in Jesus.

The question of time, indeed, involves the settlement of the whole matter. God, in the Gospel, announces an immediately impending ruin, and requires an immediate act of reconciliation to himself. When he says to a sinner, "Repent, and be converted," it is no admissible answer to him to say, "Lord, allow me time to examine the evidences of Christianity; and then, if I am convinced, I will answer thy appeal." The stern reply even of divine mercy is, "Lose not a moment. 'Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation!' Long before so much time is past, even to-morrow, you may be in perdition."

God's appeal to men, then, is not, in point of fact, based on the Christian evidences: it may now be added, that it would be of no use if it were so. Not that the Christian evidences are incomplete, or unsatisfactory; on the contrary, to a candid mind, they are the most convincing and conclusive evidences the world ever saw; but they require a candid mind, and this no unconverted man will ever bring to them—which is the same thing as to say, no unconverted man will ever be convinced by them. I have said that the Christian evidences require a candid mind. What case of moral evidence does not? Undoubtedly, there are difficulties; and in the estimate of these all the difference in the world is made by the temper of the judge. The real question is whether they are looked upon with the eye of an enemy or that of a friend. Now, ungodly men are, without exception, enemies to God, and in the spirit of an enemy they will look on the evidences of Christianity. Were they much more clear than they are, they would still find objections to them; nor would it be possible, by any amount of evidence, to silence their cavils. Why, therefore, should the evidences be made clearer for them, or why should any appeal be made to them on the ground of evidence at all? Such an appeal is inevitably futile. If ever an enemy to God is reconciled to him, it will be because the love of God in Christ Jesus shines into his heart.

It is thus that the Bible is adapted to become a test-book for the world into which it is thrown, and for every man into whose hands it comes. To the understanding it presents abundant materials for objection, and he that is willing to occupy himself with them shall find no want of employment: but all these difficulties are nothing where the heart is right; and it is doubtless to show whether the heart is right or not, that God has seen fit to leave so many difficulties in the Bible. It is still as when our Lord said to the cavilling Jews, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God" (John vii. 17).

But now, after this view of one class of the Christian evidences—for it is but one class of them which have been under observation—let us look at another, as presented to us in the text. "He that believeth on the Son of God," says the apostle, "hath the evidence in himself." The former were outward evidences; this evidence is within.

Let us take care here that we rightly understand the phraseology which the apostle employs. He does not say, He that believes the testimony of God to be true afterwards finds the evidence of its truth within himself: this would be absurd. But he says, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the evidence in himself." Now, to "believe on the Son of God" is a very different thing from believing God's testimony concerning his Son to be true. It is to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, to submit to God's method of dealing with us through him. It is thus an exercise of the heart, and not of the understanding merely; and its direct object is, not the truth of the testimony which God has borne, but the substance of that testimony itself.

Now, "he that believeth on the Son of God," the apostle tells us, "hath evidence in himself" of the truth of God's testimony concerning his Son. In what manner? Undoubtedly, by the effects which that testimony has produced on him. Let us look for a moment at these.

In the first place, the Gospel has given peace to the believer's conscience. Once laden with guilt as a burden too heavy for him to bear, and agonized by a sense of deserved condemnation, he now enjoys tranquillity in the hope of pardoning mercy. "Being justified by faith," he has "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;" and is privileged to see all his iniquities put away from him, "as far as the east is from the west."

In the second place, the Gospel has given purity to the believer's heart. Ah! how vile it was once; the dwelling-place of every sin, where creature-idolatry displaced the Creator, and rendered the whole heart unclean. But, through grace, it is not so now. Reconciled to God through Christ, he has been made to hate, and enabled to crucify, the iniquities which once ruled over him. His best affections are now given to God, his Father, and all that is holy and godlike he loves for his sake. Although far from perfect, he yet bears substantially the image of Jesus, his Redeemer.

Thirdly, the Gospel has given a worthy object to the believer's life. Formerly he lived to himself, and to the world. He had no higher object than to attain worldly good, or to revel in sensual enjoyment. But he lives now for a different and a nobler end. Bought with the precious blood of Christ, he holds himself no more his own, but another's; and he at once owns himself bound, and feels himself constrained, to glorify God in his body and his spirit, which are God's. This new aim makes him a new man. Whether he eats or drinks, or whatsoever he does, he strives to do all to the glory of God; and he is thus led to cultivate whatsoever things are true and kind, lovely and of good report.

Fourthly, the Gospel has provided the believer with a refuge in trouble. Before, as now, he was liable to affliction, and perhaps often in sorrow; but then he was fretful and impatient, petulantly challenging the dispensations of God, and repining at the disappointment of his earthly hopes. Now he has found a refuge, where he dwells in comparative tranquillity under the shadow of the Almighty. All his burdens he has learned to carry to the throne of grace, and to deposit there. In all things, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, making known his requests unto God, the peace of God which passeth all understanding keeps his heart and mind through Christ Jesus. He is now "patient in tribulation," and often rejoicing in sorrow.

Fifthly, the Gospel has given to the believer a hope of heaven; not like the vague and baseless hope which he once cherished, as thousands do still, but a "good hope through grace;" a hope founded on the rock Jesus, and rising to the highest heaven. Already it lifts his affections thitherward. It does not wither in the presence of death, or give place to dread on the verge of the grave. Sometimes he rises on

wings of strong desire, even a desire to depart and be with Jesus, which is far better; and he habitually looks forward to the inheritance laid up for him in heaven, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away.

We can easily understand now how he that believeth on the Son of God hath evidence in himself of the truth of God's testimony. In the presence of such experience, how can he possibly doubt it? Is it of the nature of fallacies or fancies to produce such effects as these? Could either a human invention, or a Satanic lie, pacify the conscience, purify the heart, renovate the life, comfort the mourner, and give hope of heaven?

Such is the nature of that inward evidence of the truth and divine origin of Christianity to which the language of the apostle directs us. Let us now look for a moment at its properties and value.

Mark its universality. Belonging to a believer on the Son of God as such, it belongs of necessity to every believer; and, whatever differences may prevail among them, it covers all these, and admits of no exception. If the learned possess it, so also the unlearned; if the civilized, so also the savage. Not the meanest, poorest, or least instructed believer, is left to doubt or darkness on this important matter.

Mark its simplicity. It is not a case in which proof results from elaborate argument, or is to be arrived at by long or learned research. It lies in the briefest possible space, and is an inference of the most direct and inevitable kind. You infer that the Gospel comes from God from the fact that it has led you to God. The premiss in the argument is a fact in your own experience, a fact of which you have no doubt; and the conclusion is reached by a single step, equally indubitable. The Gospel has been to you "the power of God unto salvation;" and, if you were a child or a fool, you could not fail to infer that it "is in truth the word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe."

Mark its conclusiveness. The inward evidence affords the basis of a conclusion, not probable only, but certain. In many arguments one feels that there may be a flaw, or that they contribute to the conclusion only a partial and imperfect support; but the inward evidence to Christianity is absolutely conclusive. Your question is, From whence is the Gospel? And the fact from which you reason is, that



the Gospel has wrought a most marvellous and blessed change in you. Now, the origin of the Gospel must be one of these three: it is either of man, of Satan, or of God. Is it doubtful which? May you not say with confidence, "Man could not have invented it; Satan would not; and none but God can have been its author"?

Mark its sufficiency—I may say, its all-sufficiency. For this evidence is sufficient in the absence of all other. Let it be supposed that you are in utter ignorance of biblical learning, and wholly destitute of critical skill; that you know—as multitudes have known, and do know—nothing but the story of the cross, and that Jesus died upon it to save sinners; and that you have been enabled to trust him, and taught to love him. This change in you is not only an evidence that the Gospel is divinely true, but it is a sufficient evidence in the absence of all besides. Though a hundred or a thousand other arguments might be adduced in confirmation, what are they to you? They can add nothing to the strength of your conviction.

And, as the inward evidence is sufficient in the absence of all other evidence, it is sufficient, also, in the face of all possible objections. If any one affirm to you that miracles are not possible, you may reply, "I know that one miracle is possible, the change of my wicked heart; and after that I can believe any other." If any one tells you that a bleeding sacrifice for sin is incredible, you may answer, "The precious blood of Christ cleanseth me from all sin." If any one suggest to you that the Bible is a fraud, you may rejoin, "It hath given light to my eyes, and gladness to my heart." What can ten thousand cavils do to put this witness out of court, or to diminish the force and conclusiveness of this evidence?

Mark its convenience. Here is an argument always at hand. It is not in the library, but in the heart. It requires not the opening of a book, but merely a glance within the breast. It is always carried about by its possessor, who cannot be found at any moment without it, or unprepared, therefore, for either the satisfaction of his own mind, or the assaults of infidelity.

From this view of the nature and value of the inward evidence of the truth and divinity of the Gospel, we may learn in how satisfactory a position God has left this great



and all-important question. The entire mass of outward evidence he has been content to leave either inaccessible to, or unmanageable by, the great bulk of mankind; indeed, in presenting his appeal to them, he passes the question itself entirely by, and addresses himself exclusively to the sense of moral necessity and adaptation. "You are a rebel, be reconciled to me; here is my chosen Mediator, trust him." Whoever will not do this, God cares not to wrangle with him about the evidences, but he places such a rebel under condemnation. Whoever will do this, however, God presents to him at once a conclusive proof. If a believing sinner say to him, "Lord, I have trusted in Jesus: is thy testimony concerning him true?" God's answer is, "Thou hast the evidence in thyself. Hath it not saved thee?"

We may learn, also, what is the attitude of Christian wisdom. It is not by any means that a believer in Christ should be indifferent to the question, Is the Gospel true? but that he should know how to settle it on its right ground. He may find, perhaps, that, in the world of letters, discussion is extensively carried on respecting the outward evidences of Christianity, and he may sometimes meet with objections and difficulties which it may seem required of him to answer, or to solve. Let him know, and be assured, that he is fairly liable to no such demand. His evidence of the truth and divinity of the Gospel is in his heart, evidence conclusive by itself, and in the face of all objections. What is it to him that there is an assault of unbelievers on the outworks of the "strong city" in which he dwells? Let a chosen band of the Lord's host, endowed with competent skill, go forth and encounter them; but let the children of Zion not meddle in the affray, for which they are not armed, and by which their security cannot be endangered.

In plain words, I say to believers in Jesus, Do not read infidel books; either as led by an itching curiosity, or as provoked by hostile challenge. Certainly, you may employ your time to much greater profit; while it is possible, perhaps probable, that, by doing so, you may be led into entanglements and embarrassments much to be regretted.

I go further, and say to believers in Jesus, Do not attempt to answer infidel objections to Christianity. If you are ever led to seek the conversion of an infidel, pass all his objections by, and resolutely refuse to notice them. Begin with him

where God begins, with his guilt and misery as a condemned sinner, and the love of God in the gift of his Son for his salvation. You may not in this manner convert him, but you certainly will not in any other; while, by attempting to answer his objections, you may entangle and injure yourself.

We may learn, also, how important it is for a believer in Jesus to cultivate vigorous and lively piety. Not only his strength and comfort as a Christian, but his armour against the assaults of infidelity, lies here. It is by religion within him, and by this only, that he knows that the Gospel of his salvation is true. But for this, he might be open to the suggestion that the Bible is a forgery, and his hope a delusion. O Christian! keep bright thy inward evidence, if thou wouldst keep at bay the audacious infidel, or the lurking enemy of thy soul!

I close this discourse with a word to the ungodly. You may resentfully complain, perhaps, of what I have said, that to you, as unbelievers, practically no evidence is presented of the truth and divinity of Christianity, since neither learning nor time is granted you for the mastery of that which exists. To believe in the truth and divinity of Christianity, however, is not the thing—at all events, it is not the first thing—which is required of you. Your immediate duty is to be reconciled to God, your immediate interest is to flee from the wrath to come. By the Gospel God appeals directly to your conscience and to your heart. Let your heart and your conscience respond to him. If you will not do this, he holds you guilty of a wrong, and will bring you into judgment for it, for which it will be your wisdom to prepare yourself as best you may. But, above all things, raise no pretext for delay by alleging that you are examining the evidences of Christianity. As a rebel against God, you have no right to delay for a moment, under any pretext, your reconciliation to him; nor, while you are a rebel, will any examination of evidences lead you to conviction. Just do his will, and then you “shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.”

## CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE IN SUFFERING.

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"The cup which my Father giveth me, shall I not drink it?"—*John xviii. 11.*

WHAT an interesting and wonderful thought it is that Christ should be our example! There are some divines, indeed, who teach us that Christ is our example, and nothing more; that he both lived only in order to teach us how to live, and died only to show us how willing we ought to be to die for righteousness. But I am not going to preach to you this gospel; it is not one which I can either trust for myself, or commend to you. And, assuredly, it is not the doctrine of Holy Scripture. It is surely more than this that the prophet means when he tells us that the Lord "made his soul an offering for sin" (Isa. liii. 10); and the apostle, when he says that Christ "bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 24). Nor is it less than the shedding of his blood as a sacrifice of expiation for sin that can give a solid peace to the guilty and awakened conscience.

It is, nevertheless, a fact, and, as I have said, an interesting and wonderful fact, that Christ is our example. It is wonderful that he *can* be so; for, when we think of him as a divine person, it seems hard to conceive how he, being God, can have acted under the influences which determine the conduct of men. Yet we have to think of him as not divine only, but as human also; his wonderful person being constituted of the two natures in intimate combination, so that he was both God and man, and as truly and perfectly the latter as the former. As man, therefore, he properly and necessarily acted under human motives, and acted out human feelings, so that his conduct may justly be regarded as a pattern for ours.

And it is a highly interesting thought that it should be so. Here is an example presented to us, as an example should be, without defect or imperfection; and yet one

which is not, in its perfection, so absolutely elevated above us as to be beyond our imitation: it is perfect rectitude and consummate beauty, yet both in the exercise of faculties like our own, and in circumstances like our own. It is God clothing himself with humanity in order to show us how he would live if he were man.

And it is remarkable how strikingly the life of Christ was adapted to be generally, I may say universally, exemplary to us. An ordinary life is commonly of one kind, passed in similar scenes, and having little variety; but the life of Christ partook of many aspects of human condition, and exhibited widely diverse phases of human character. He was at once poor and rich; "a man of sorrows," and of celestial gladness; of humble origin, yet heir to a throne; persecuted to the death, yet the applauded hero of a royal procession. Who among men may not find a model here?

And that he meant his actions to be exemplary cannot be questioned. You are familiar with at least one instance in which this design was avowed. After the passover supper, he "laid aside his garments, and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. . . . So, after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well; for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John xiii. 4-15). It cannot be supposed that in its general design this action stands alone. His whole life is doubtless comprehended in the general statement of the apostle, that Christ "left us an example, that we should follow his steps" (1 Pet. ii. 21). I do not know, indeed, that I should say absolutely his *whole* life, since there are at least two aspects of it which may justly be deemed exceptional. The first of these is the employment of miraculous power, in which, of course, we have no participation; and the second is the occasional assumption of indignant denunciation, which to him, undoubtedly, was competent, but which would not appear to be, under any circumstances, warrantable in his disciples at large. With these exceptions,

perhaps, the whole of Christ's life may be deemed exemplary; the simplicity and purity of his personal character, the elevation of his piety, his active benevolence, his meekness in provocation, his patience in suffering.

It is this last feature of his character that is brought under our notice by the words of our text: "The cup which my Father giveth me, shall I not drink it?" Let us notice, in the first place, the attitude in which our blessed Lord is here exhibited; and, in the second place, the lessons which it is adapted to teach us.

I. We notice, in the first place, the attitude in which our blessed Lord is here exhibited.

Jesus Christ had always been "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;" but he was now in the midst of that baptism of woe in which his sufferings were consummated, and the words which are before us exhibit his attitude as a sufferer in three aspects.

1. Here is, in the first place, a devout recognition of the hand of God. He calls his sorrow "the cup which my Father giveth me."

In the actual circumstances this language is scarcely less than surprising. If, indeed, it had been uttered when, shortly before, he had been enduring that mysterious agony which, in default of any apparent cause, could be ascribed to nothing but the immediate hand of God, it would have been obviously appropriate. That *was* a cup which his Father gave him. But now the circumstances were widely different. He was still, indeed, with his disciples in the garden of Gethsemane; but this privileged and hallowed retirement had been violated by a band of officers, who, sent by the chief priests, and guided by a treacherous disciple who "knew the place," had come to effect his arrest. This trouble was surely not from the hand of God, but from that of man. The malignity and force of his enemies were at work here; and yet Jesus says of this, it is "the cup which my Father giveth me."

Nor was he mistaken. For second causes, however prominent they may be, never operate but under the control of the great First Cause. Oh! how dreadful our lot would be if it were otherwise! God be thanked that his superior power and will rule, and overrule, all beings, and that nothing can occur to us but by his permission, and for the working



out of his purpose. No one knew this better than he who was now suffering under human and diabolical malice, and he promptly and devoutly acknowledged it. This treacherous disciple, and these armed bands, were to him but the ministers of his Father's will; they but filled the cup which his Father gave him. And there is every reason to believe that our Lord cherished the same sentiment throughout the whole period of his further sufferings. Could he refuse such a cup?

2. In the attitude of Christ as here exhibited, there is, in the second place, a touching reference to God's parental relation to him. He says, "The cup which *my Father* giveth me."

It is true, indeed, that this epithet was ordinarily used by our Lord when speaking of God; but it has a special force and signification when employed in this hour of sorrow. It at once puts the idea of divine sovereignty in its strongest form, and blends with it a sentiment of infinite tenderness. A father's will requires reverent submission; but it is a will submission to which must be of all most easy, since it is a will of assured wisdom and love. And on this tender sentiment Jesus seems to have been especially leaning in the depth of his sufferings. The cup he had to drink was the cup which his Father gave him. It was not a cup of wrath, a token of alienation from his Father's heart. In taking it Jesus did not indulge any suspicion of his Father's love, but affectionately called him Father still. He was happily able to say, "my Father," without a doubt upon his spirit. He was sure, therefore, not only that all was kind, but that all was wise; and that his sufferings were working out a design as worthy of infinite wisdom as consistent with infinite love. Could he refuse such a cup?

We may put this idea into comparison with others which might have been influential on the mind of our Lord, and which, indeed, we know were so. It was on this same occasion, according to the narrative of Matthew (Matt. xxvi. 54), that he sustained himself by a reference to the writings of the ancient prophets, and the course which had been by inspiration marked out for him. "But how, then," said he, "shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" We know, also, that his mind could be no stranger to the recollection of the great work which was to be accom-

plished by his sorrows; and he might have said, "If I do not drink this cup, how shall this perishing world be redeemed?" Such thoughts as these would undoubtedly have been great supports to his mind, but he leaned rather on tenderness and love. "The cup which my Father giveth me," said he, "shall I not drink it?"

3. In the attitude of Christ as here exhibited, we notice, in the third place, his entire and cordial submission. "The cup which my Father giveth me, *shall I not drink it?*"

The entire and cordial submission so strongly expressed in this language was no less decisively manifested in his whole behaviour. When the "band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees" came, "with lanterns, and torches, and weapons," he neither attempted resistance, nor sought escape. He "went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?" And when they answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth," he replied, "I am he." Nor did he take advantage of the supernatural terror under the influence of which the officers "went backward, and fell to the ground," but a second time he exhibited the same courtesy.

This quiet surrender of himself was little to the taste of his disciples, one of whom—Peter—led by his constitutional ardour, drew his sword, and smote off the ear of the high priest's servant. But in this Jesus showed no sympathy. On the contrary, he rebuked even this act of friendship, and healed the wound which had been inflicted. Yet it was not weakness; for he must have been conscious of a power before the slightest exercise of which these armed bands would have sunk, not into faintness merely, but into death. "Knowest thou not," he said to Peter, "that I could now pray to my Father, and he should give me more than twelve legions of angels?" But his Father had put the cup into his hand, and he would "drink it" at once, without resistance, and without a murmur.

Such in sorrow was Jesus. How lovely a sufferer! Simple, and without extravagance; yet perfect, and without a flaw. And did he set herein an example for us? Are we to suffer—may we suffer—as he did? What a high endeavour! What a blessed hope!

II. Let us reverently, then, in the second place, address ourselves to the lessons which we are thus to learn.

Our sufferings are, of course, in some most important

respects, widely dissimilar from those of our Lord, more especially as his sufferings constituted an expiation for sin; yet, as he suffered, so, in point of fact, we suffer too, and in ways so far like his own as to render his deportment in suffering justly exemplary to us.

1. And, in the first place, we have to learn from his example in all our sufferings to acknowledge the hand of God.

In many cases God is not the immediate author of our sorrow, but second causes intervene, by which our attention is apt to be too far withdrawn from him. Sometimes, by carelessness or by folly, we inflict injury on ourselves; and we fret at ourselves on account of it. Sometimes we suffer injury from external causes, as in many cases of disease; and then we repine, perhaps, at the weather, or the prevalent infection. Sometimes we suffer injury from others, as from an angry enemy, or a treacherous friend; and then we denounce the evil disposition of which we have been the victim. But in all such cases the immediate presence of second causes blinds us to the remoter, but not less certain, action of the first cause. Neither angry enemy nor treacherous friend, neither chilling wind nor pestiferous blast, neither faults nor follies of our own, can inflict injury upon us without the oversight and permission of the universally superintending Providence. Everything occurs by, at least, the permissive will of God. If ever there was an occasion on which the immediate action of men might have been recognized, one was constituted by that which happened to our Lord in the circumstances which we have been contemplating. A band of officers from the chief priests, led by a treacherous disciple, had come to arrest him; and of this human assault he immediately speaks as the cup which his Father gave him. It was no wonder he bore it calmly.

And could not we, too, bear affliction more calmly, at least, than it is often borne, if we were thus promptly to recognize the hand of God in all things? How tranquillizing the thought is, that, as not a sparrow falleth to the ground without his notice, so no incident in our affairs is without his permission, or other than an instrument of his will. Even respecting angry Shimei, David said, "Let him curse, for God hath bidden him." And by a similar recollection we might discipline ourselves into a reverent submission to

the supreme and sovereign will which it is our privilege to recognize, and to which it is our duty to bow.

2. In the second place, we have to learn from the example of our Lord in all our sufferings to recognize God as a Father.

This is not a matter without difficulty. When God's dealings with us are agreeable, it is comparatively easy to call him Father, and to think him kind; but, when his dispensations are painful, our feeling of his fatherly relation to us is apt to become clouded, and our recognition of it embarrassed. We think that his methods are too severe for it, and that, if he were a father, he would not treat us so. How great an aggravation this is of trouble we know, perhaps, too well. It is an immediate loss of one of the sweetest consolations it is possible to enjoy, and it gives to affliction of every kind a character of intensity which it is the hardest of all to bear.

I have already observed how great was Christ's happiness in that no cloud ever rested on his experience, and that he could, in his deepest sufferings, always call God, Father. You, perhaps, dear reader, say that it is not thus with you, and that you cannot call God, Father. O! if you could! How easily then could you take the cup of affliction at his hand, and drink it! Then go to him, dear reader, and tell him so. Tell him that the cup is too bitter without the light of his countenance and the consolations of his love; and that you cannot drink it until he give you a filial spirit, and help you to take it as the cup which your Father giveth you. Will he be displeased with your importunate request for such a privilege?

O! it is inconceivable how great a mitigation even of the bitterest cup it is to take it as from a father's hand. We are sure then that it is given us, not in wrath, but in love. We seem to hear him say as he presents it to us, "I will do you no hurt;" and we know that he will not. Our tenderest and most precious interests can suffer no damage from *his* hand. Nay, we cannot but be confident that he means to do us good, and, if in a way of mystery, yet in a way of wisdom too. There is a supremacy, indeed, in the position of a father against which a child may not rebel; but there is a lovingkindness in the heart of a father which a child cannot mistrust. And, if it is even so with an earthly parent, how much more with our Father who is in heaven!

Yes, it can admit of no doubt that there are, in his judgment, and therefore in reality, things better for us than uninterrupted prosperity, and unbroken pleasure. There may be wise, holy, and blessed, objects to be attained by putting a cup of sorrow into our hand, and worth all the bitterness that may be infused into it. Can we not trust a Father that loves us so well?

3. In the third place, we have to learn from the example of our Lord to exercise a cordial submission to divine dispensations.

“The cup which my Father giveth me,” said he, “*shall I not drink it?*” Let me be allowed the familiarity of saying, that there is a difference between drinking an unpleasant potion and being drenched with it. It is taken in either case, but in a different manner. The temper of the child is not the same. In the one case there is a gentle submission, in the other a stubborn resistance, which a parent’s hand, as well as a parent’s authority, is wanted to overcome. It is only in this manner that some children will take medicine, and it is only in a manner very much like this that many of God’s children will drink the cup of sorrow. *Drink* it, indeed, they will not; but, since it must be taken, the heavenly Father is obliged to drench them with it, and he does so.

Ah, my brethren, is this like good children? Were it not more worthy of our privilege to take the cup out of our Father’s hand more submissively? We gain nothing by our resistance, for the cup is divinely filled for us, and we must drink it: the only question is, whether we shall drink it amidst the miseries of a complaining and reluctant temper, or with the kindly gentleness of a submissive spirit. Which would be most Christ-like we know: have we the grace to imitate him?

What a wonderful and touching thought it is, my brethren, that this noble and beautiful pattern of child-like suffering should be set before us for our imitation. So Jesus suffered; and so we may suffer. It is our privilege, our calling, our hope. Can we aspire so high? Do we really wish to throw off our impatience, our murmurings, our petulance; to take the cup which our Father giveth us, and drink it? It is a high and noble calling: may God count us worthy of it!



The submissiveness of Jesus in sorrow has made no inconsiderable contribution to his glory. It is remembered in heaven how gently he took out of his Father's hand the cup of anguish, and how submissively he drank it; and it constitutes one of the elements of his everlasting praise. And we, if we will imitate his example in his humiliation, may be associated with him in his glory. Like his, our resignation shall not lose its reward. But will our impatience gain one?

It is a blessed thought, my brethren, that it is only in this world that the heavenly Father presents to his children the cup of sorrow. It was so with the first-born. He drinks now the wine of the kingdom, and has put into his hand a cup in which there is no bitterness. And it shall be so with us. Here our cup of sorrow cannot be evaded, but it shall be no element of our future condition. There is no more sickness, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain, neither shall there be any more death; for the former things are passed away. There all is joy, everlasting joy. Come, then, heavenly Father; give us the cup which thou hast prepared for us. From thine hand we will accept, and drink it.

## THE RECOMPENSE OF THE REWARD.

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“He had respect unto the recompense of the reward.”—*Heb.* xi. 26.

IN the extended and highly-interesting passage of which these words are a part, the apostle has in his hands the subject of FAITH; faith, not in the sense in which it is the instrument of a sinner's deliverance from wrath, but in the sense in which it is the vital power of a Christian's activity. Thus in chap. x., ver. 38, he says, “The just shall live by faith;” and at the commencement of chap. xi. he gives a definition of this all-important grace: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen;” or, more properly, faith is the realization of things not seen, the substantiation of things hoped for. And he then gives many examples of the power which faith, in this view of it, had exercised. His examples, indeed, are all drawn from the Old Testament; but this was of necessity, since, at the time he wrote, there were no others to be cited: and, if it should be observed that they are not all of them examples of true religion, it will be found that they all of them illustrate the power of faith in the sense in which he is treating of it.

Of these examples we are not now about to speak in detail. We direct our attention particularly to that of Moses, who, “when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,” but identified himself with his afflicted brethren of the house of Israel. His conduct in this instance was certainly sufficiently remarkable. His adoption by the royal Egyptian princess placed him in circumstances highly favourable to his temporal advancement, perhaps, rendered possible his ultimate possession of the crown; while his renunciation of this prerogative would not only blast all his worldly prospects, but would practically mix him up with a people enslaved, degraded, and oppressed. We may well ask what could have been the reasons of such

a choice; and the answer to this question is given in the words of our text, "He had respect to the recompense of the reward."

These words are interesting and full of meaning, but it is not in the first instance easy to see what their meaning can be. What was "the recompense of the reward" to which Moses had respect? Assuredly, nothing earthly, for all earthly considerations were renounced in the very fact of his choice. And what else was before him? The language employed by the apostle will afford us a clue to this mystery. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt" (ver. 24-26). The reproach of being a Hebrew was, then, in some sense, "the reproach of Christ." In what sense? It was reproach borne for Christ; for from that despised Hebrew race was Christ to descend, and by identifying himself with that race alone could Moses secure a relation to him. This, then, was "the recompense of the reward" to which he had respect. Favoured with an enlightened view of the character and kingdom of the Messiah, he preferred taking a part in advancing the process which led to his coming, and securing an interest in the blessings of his reign, to all that Egypt could offer him; and he made his practical choice accordingly.

But, turning now from the particular case of Moses, we may found upon our text the general observation, that in true religion there is an element of reward.

I. We shall make it our business, in the first place, to lay down this doctrine clearly, with the necessary explanations. We say with the necessary explanations, because we allow that explanations are necessary, and that the language we have employed is liable to be misunderstood.

True religion, then, be it observed, is far from being *wholly* a matter of reward. In regard to the primary aspect of religion, our deliverance from the curse of the law and our acceptance with God, through the mercy of God, and the obedience unto death of our Lord Jesus Christ, a provision is made which becomes effectual to us by our faith, or by our submission to God's method of justifying us through his Son. No regard is had in this respect to our faith itself, beyond its

instrumentality to give efficacy to the mechanism (so to speak) which God has contrived and arranged, and which waits for this act of submission on our part in order to avail for our justification.

But a secondary view may be taken of religion. After the primary questions of our deliverance from wrath and acceptance with God are settled, and settled once for all, religion is in continuance a life, both of self-denial, and of service; and in both these views there may be—there is—attached to it an element of reward.

Here let us first make good our position, that religion is a life both of self-denial and of service.

And, first, for self-denial. Our readers will immediately call to remembrance the language of our Lord, in which he declares self-denial, both in the act and the habit, to be among the great features of the Christian life. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke ix. 23). And on another occasion, when "there went great multitudes with him, he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv. 25-27).

It is true, indeed, that the discipleship of Christ was then to be taken up under circumstances of special difficulty and hazard; but the great principle is the same in all ages, and in all circumstances. In the heart which is given to Jesus all other objects of affection must be subordinated to him. A man's father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, must be *loved less* than Christ, or he is surely not fitted for the frequent, and sometimes costly, sacrifices which his professed discipleship may require at his hands.

And in the experience of piety we know that it is so. In taking Christ for our Lord, the principle of self-preference and self-pleasing is consciously exchanged for consecration to him. In spirit we sacrifice everything for him; and few of his disciples pass a life in which the spirit of sacrifice is not called into very sensible practical action. It is still the Christian's necessary calling to "take up his cross daily."

And, as religion is a life of self-denial, so also it is a life of service. Christ reckons us his servants, and gives "to every man his work." Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we are to do all to the glory of God. Our example is to shine to his praise. Our conversation is to minister grace to the hearers. Our time, our talents, our property, our domestic and social influence, all are to be employed for him. Of all the gifts bestowed on us in his manifold bounty we are stewards, and we shall have to give an account of our employment of them.

Religion being thus a life at once of service and self-denial, we say that an element of reward is attached to it.

In point of fact, such is the express statement of Holy Scripture itself. Hear, for example, the words of our Lord: "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life" (Mark x. 29, 30). It is, of course, not possible to understand this language literally. Its meaning must be one in which it can be fulfilled in destitution, in the dungeon, at the stake; and the idea seems to be that the loss of temporal things shall be largely compensated by the abundance of spiritual joy. We know that in fact it has been so. Martyrs at the stake have experienced a triumphant gladness in which the happiness of a whole life may well be conceived to have been concentrated; and there are sufferers for Christ in modern days, and indirectly known to ourselves, whose joy under persecution seems greatly to overbalance its bitterness. And, if it be so in the present world, how much more amidst the transcendent glories of the world to come!

And, as an element of reward is thus attached to self-denial, so is it also to service. This is made plain by the parable of the talents, in every form in which it is presented to us. Thus, for example, as we have it in the gospel by Matthew: "And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents; behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few



things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matt. xxv. 20, 21). And this idea was freely taken up by the apostles. In the epistle to the Hebrews, for example, we have the following language: "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister" (Heb. vi. 10). The idea entered largely into the experience of the apostles themselves, for thus speaks the prince of the apostles: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8).

And, if it needed further illustration, this might be derived from the second and third chapters of the book of Revelation, where the addresses to the churches are wound up in every instance with a stimulating appeal of this kind. Let us take a single specimen: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. iii. 21).

It is thus evident from Scripture that an element of reward does attach to the Christian life. Let us now endeavour to unfold this idea by two or three general remarks.

In the first place, there is in the Christian life an element fitted to reward: nothing, indeed, by which reward can be merited, but something with which reward may be congruous. What we mean is LOVE; love to Christ, the animating principle of the Christian's life, whether in respect of self-denial or of service. We all feel it is a universal dictate of the human heart, that every expression of love is entitled to a kindly, if not a grateful, acknowledgment; and he that has constituted man's heart thus has surely made it after the pattern of his own. Every expression of love towards him he may fitly mark with some token of his approval and acceptance. Should we go too far if we were to say that it would be unworthy of him not to do so?

In the second place, God is in possession of means by which tokens of love to him may be suitably rewarded. There may not unnaturally be a kind of recoil from the idea of reward, under the forms in which it is usually presented to us

in the Scriptures—such as that of wearing a crown, or being seated on a throne; but we should recollect that these, and all other expressions of the same class, are figures of speech, and not descriptions. Through the difficulty, the impossibility, rather, of expressing in mortal words celestial things, the most beautiful of earthly objects are used as metaphors; but we should not allow the glitter of the metaphor to hide from us the very dissimilar, but far greater, glory of the reality. The thing which crowns and thrones denote is the love of God, responsive to, and in gracious acceptance of, our love to him; and while this, in its highest expressions, confers an honour infinitely higher than the earthly baubles which are put into comparison with it, it constitutes a recompense which we cannot for a moment despise, but must, on the contrary, most highly appreciate. The love of God is the blessedness, not only of angels, but of Christ himself; it is the utmost blessedness of our own hearts, and every degree and every mode in which it may be expressed towards us must be acknowledged to bring new honour and new delight. Our service and self-denial, therefore, God *can* reward in a method of which we cannot but intensely feel the value.

And, in the third place, that such reward should be wanting on God's part is a conception not to be entertained. It is not for a moment to be supposed that he will lay himself under unrequited obligation to his creatures, or permit acts of service, often laborious, or acts of self-denial, often severe, to be rendered to him, and not repay them. He rather takes the opportunity of illustrating the boundless riches of his grace by a reward, appropriate, indeed, but unspeakably glorious. Not for our sakes, but for his own, he confers reward, and he does it according to his own fulness. Acknowledgments of service on earth correspond with the means of the party making them. The gratitude of the poor may be expressed in words; but the rich return thanks after the measure of their wealth, and princes according to the style of royal bounty. What, then, shall be the magnificence of the rewards conferred by the King of kings?

II. We thus complete the first part of our discourse, in which we proposed to lay down clearly the Christian doctrine of reward, with the necessary explanations. We now, in the second place, propose to show the claim which the doctrine has to a practical regard.

It is evident that the doctrine is not speculative, but adapted to exercise a direct and powerful practical influence. Our religion is a life of service and self-denial, and various motives conspire to sustain us. Duty requires it, gratitude impels it, and love will make it sweet; but more than this, it will have a "recompense of reward." Every token of our love presented to God will be met by a token of his love in return, constituting a reward unutterably precious.

1. O what a thought it is that our poor fleeting lives may be applied to such a purpose! that we may be continually doing such things as God will kindly accept, and gratefully own! O what a value should this teach us to attach to our moments and opportunities as they pass! Shall we suffer them to slide idly by, when a diligent improvement of them will provide us with inestimable joys for heaven and immortality? How great is the folly of our sloth, by which we lose so much! How wise would be a wakeful diligence and an earnest zeal, that should suffer no opportunity to be lost, no moment to be void!

Ah! brethren, are we not far from living under the habitual realization and influence of this thought? How much of our time is idly spent! How many of our means of usefulness are wasted! And we think it hard to labour incessantly, and to take up our cross daily, and esteem a little, and perhaps not a little, sloth and self-indulgence a luxury! Ah! little do we think how precious a treasure is in our hands, and what inestimable joys we are trampling under foot! What! is it not enough to sweeten labour to think that God will smile approvingly upon our toil? Is it not enough to make our deeds of Christian kindness delightful, to think that the eternal Judge will hereafter say, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me"? Is the future "recompense of reward" so trivial that it is outweighed by the fatigues of present labour, or the pains of present sacrifice? Might we not rather justly say, Would that labours and self-denials might be a thousand times multiplied, if all might in a similar manner be rewarded! Are not they most privileged who have most to do and most to bear, and who bear and do it most cheerfully and most diligently?

2. The idea before us is the more worthy of being deeply pondered, because of the place which it evidently holds in

God's method of dealing with us. Not only is there a natural adaptation in the system of reward to stimulate our zeal and sustain our patience, but it is the method which God, in his infinite wisdom and grace, has devised for this purpose. "He knoweth our frame," and estimates justly all the sensibilities with which he has endowed it; and it is in his wisdom that he makes to us this appeal. He thinks that the various tokens of his approbation which it is in his power to confer will recompense in a manner intensely gratifying to us every labour and every sacrifice, however numerous, or however severe, and that in creating opportunities of attaining them he does us an inestimable kindness. And do we, by a practical disregard of his method, mean to tell him that there is nothing in his rewards worth aspiring after, nothing fitted to kindle our ambition, or to make amends for our endurance? Ah! how different it was with his first-born Son, "who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame"!

III. It will be said, however, probably, that it is not easy to bring this divine system of reward into practical operation; and we will therefore proceed, in the third place, to some illustration of the mode in which this may be most effectually done.

1. In the first place, the subject should be kept clearly and broadly distinct from the question of our acceptance with God. With that, as we have already said, the conception of reward has nothing to do, and we cannot allow the two to come into contact in our experience without creating confusion. The proper method is to regard our justification before God as a change already effected in our condition, and complete; a change effected by our exercise of faith in Christ, a transaction past, and never needing to be renewed. Then there is clear scope for the conception of reward, and facility for its practical application. But if, as is often the case, the question of our justification before God is a question never settled, but always in debate, the conception of reward cannot be entertained without mixing itself up with another, and one from which it ought to be kept entirely separate. Think not of it, therefore, dear reader, until you are satisfied that, being justified by faith, you have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: after that, not as a rebel still needing release from condemnation, but as a child

holding a conscious position in your heavenly Father's love, have respect to the recompense of reward by which every token of your filial love to him shall be rendered back into your bosom.

2. In the second place, keep clearly before your eyes the nature of the rewards you are to expect. Understood in the letter, the scriptural descriptions of these may be unattractive to you, inconsistent with your feelings of humility now, and with the humble position which you would anticipate for yourself in the heavenly world. You should recollect, however, how entirely figurative these descriptions are, and how utterly unlike them all is the reality which they are intended to exhibit to you. All that God beholds in you to recompense is love—the love wherewith you render him service, and bear your cross: and, in strictness, all with which he will recompense it is love—his love to you, in tokens of kindly acceptance and approval of yours to him. This may perhaps—perhaps must—be an honour not only equal to, but far exceeding, that of wearing earthly crowns or sitting on earthly thrones; but, however that may be, it is a recompense which you cannot either despise or reject. It belongs essentially to your renovated character that the love of God should be your greatest happiness. It is so now, and it must be so hereafter. Thrones and crowns you might despise, but expressions of the love of God you must ever receive with reverent thankfulness, and ineffable delight.

3. In the third place, sedulously cultivate the motive which will entitle you to reward. Note carefully, and set it down in your habitual recollection, that what is to be rewarded is neither service in itself, nor self-denial in itself, but the motive which ought to actuate both the one and the other. This motive is love, for which God looks, and on which he will smile; but, where this is wanting, he sees nothing which can afford him gratification. Ah! how sadly we are wanting here! How much, even of religious duty, is done as a mere matter of duty, or of routine! How many acts of service and of self-denial are rendered without much, perhaps without any, of the living power of love! And these all lose their reward! There is nothing in them to win divine recompense. Alas, great is our folly! O! let us see to it that what we do is done from love, that, at all events, it may be not unsusceptible of reward.



In the method which we have thus cursorily illustrated we may pursue a daily course, having, like Moses, "respect unto the recompense of the reward." Faith may be to us, as to him, the realization of things not seen, and the substantiation of things hoped for; while futurity shall grow rich with the accumulating element, and its full manifestation shall constitute an inestimable part of the glory to be revealed.

## HYMN.

FROM boundless love and grace divine  
The humblest service finds reward;  
And saints the recompense receive  
Which God's approving smiles afford.

Nor thrones, nor crowns, can ever tell  
How high the honour of his praise,  
When deeds of faithful love shall be,  
Accepted, laid before his face.

My God, and is such hope for me?  
O wake, my heart, to glad desire!  
Such recompense before my eyes  
May well an earnest zeal inspire.

## THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM.

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“I will bless thee, . . . and thou shalt be a blessing.”—*Gen.* xii. 2.

IN the whole of the Old Testament, no character stands out with greater prominence, or exhibits itself with greater dignity, than that of Abraham. Of obscure origin, and of comparatively mean condition, he was selected in divine providence for a position of distinguished happiness and honour. His prerogative was announced to him by the God of the whole earth in the following terms:—

“I will make of thee a great nation,  
And I will bless thee,  
And make thy name great,  
And thou shalt be a blessing.  
And I will bless them that bless thee,  
And curse him that curseth thee;  
And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

And magnificently was this announcement fulfilled; through a path of mystery, indeed, yet in the end the promise was found faithful.

Abraham was blessed; primarily in his own spiritual condition, with a standing in God's favour and friendship. When the promise was made to him, “he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness” (*Genesis* xv. 6). Thus the great patriarch, like his precursor Noah, “became heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (*Heb.* xi. 7), and was established in his position as the “friend” of God (*Isa.* xli. 8). Subsequently the divine declaration, “I will be a God to thee,” was nobly fulfilled by acts of divine guidance, protection, and benediction, which constitute one of the most interesting portions of Old Testament history.

And Abraham was made a blessing; that is to say, a means, or a channel, of blessing to others. From him flowed a multitude of temporal benefits to his immediate posterity,

which may be summed up in their multiplication as a people, and their inheritance of the land of Canaan; and from him have remotely flowed more precious spiritual benefits to the world, through his seed, the Christ.

How interesting it is to find the apostle employing these facts as illustrative of the privileges of believers in Jesus, and telling us that "the blessing of Abraham comes on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ" (Gal. iii. 14). In the first instance, no doubt, this language is verified in our justification by faith, a privilege in respect of which Abraham was "the father (or pattern) of all them that believe" (Romans iv. 11); but, if in this respect we imitate his example, the whole of Abraham's blessing follows in the train of our faith. To ourselves, as well as to the father of the faithful, may we regard it as said, "I will bless thee, and thou shalt be a blessing."

Our subject needs no artificial division. Its two parts lie simply before us. It is the believer's blessing, personal and relative.

I. First, then, of the believer's personal blessing. "I will bless thee." We look on this as exemplified in the history of Abraham, and we notice the following particulars:—

1. Abraham had God for his portion. In these terms the promise ran: "I will be a God to thee." And it was repeated in the following form:—"Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, thy exceeding great reward" (Gen. xv. 1). In like manner it is the privilege of every believer in Jesus to say, "Thou art my portion, O Lord" (Ps. cxix. 57). Of what wonderful import the language is! The Lord, with all his infinite fulness of glory and of grace—the Lord our portion! How much greater HE is than all his gifts! And how vastly he exceeds them all in giving us himself! Yet nothing less can satisfy the exceeding riches of his grace, and, in truth, nothing less can satisfy the cravings of his creature, man. Such was Abraham's blessing, and such is ours, if we copy Abraham's faith.

2. Abraham had a wisely-allotted portion of earthly good. In some respects he was a prosperous man. His wealth, in cattle, and goods, and household servants, increased; yet his prosperity was tempered with trial. He had no home, but was kept in a state of perpetual wandering. He had no child, so that one born in his house would, to all appearance,

be his heir. In the most material interests of life, Abraham was a tried and disappointed man. He would have given the half—perhaps the whole—of his wealth for a son. Yet was his portion of earthly good wisely allotted, and the prosperity of his early life was well adapted to the wants of his age.

Like Abraham's, our lot also is a mixed one. None of us are without mercies, and probably some great ones; none of us are without trials, and probably some severe ones. But our portion of good and evil is, like Abraham's, allotted with divine skill, and shall be made conducive to its appointed end. No part of our lot is without its place in the plan of eternal wisdom; and none shall be without its immediate or remote results of good. The whole of it is blessing.

3. Abraham was carried through a process of moral and spiritual culture. Brought out from a state of idolatry, he had much to learn of the character and ways of the true God; and, destined to a high position in divine providence, he was to be called to the exercise of distinguished virtue. Hence God said to him, "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect" (Gen. xvii. 1). His faith in the promise was put more than once to a severe test: in one instance, by the long delay of its fulfilment in the birth of Isaac; and in another, by the mysterious requirement to offer his son in sacrifice. And the more his virtue was tried the more brightly it shone. "He staggered not at the promise through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform" (Rom. iv. 20, 21). Thus was Abraham prepared for his distinguished position as the pattern of believers, and the friend of God.

And through a similar process are believers in Jesus also being carried. God's various methods with them constitute the trial of their graces, increasing their strength, bringing them into more conspicuous exercise, and preparing them at once for appointed usefulness on earth, and for destined honour in heaven. If trials are severe, they are but like the furnace into which gold is cast, not for its destruction, but for its purification. And trials may be regarded as bearing a proportion to the blessing intended. If Abraham was more tried than others, it was because he was to occupy a more conspicuous position, and to inherit a larger blessing.

4. Abraham enjoyed a watchful care and secure protection in all circumstances. His circumstances were often perilous and difficult, of which your recollection of his history will readily supply you with instances; but his wanderings were directed by an ever-watchful eye, and his safety guarded by an Almighty hand. We may include him in the more general description given by the Psalmist of God's care over Israel:—

“ When they went from one nation to another,  
From one kingdom to another people,  
He suffered no man to do them wrong;  
Yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes,  
Saying, Touch not mine anointed,  
And do my prophets no harm.”

Ps. cv. 13-15.

And a similar privilege belongs to believers in Jesus. If, like Abraham, they have to become wanderers in a strange land, and to pitch their tabernacle in the midst of perils, there is an eye of love that watches their every step, and an arm of power ever outstretched for their defence. Neither accident shall befall them, nor malice injure them. The Lord shall deliver them from every evil work, and preserve them unto his heavenly kingdom (2 Tim. iv. 18).

Thus, my brethren, the blessing of Abraham comes upon us through Jesus Christ. Is it not a high privilege for us to be blessed after so distinguished a pattern?

II. But let us now look at the relative part of Abraham's blessing. “I will bless thee, and thou shalt be a blessing.” This was a conspicuous portion of the patriarch's prerogative, and it might seem to be one in which he might stand alone.

It is true, indeed, that there are some among believers in Jesus who are either so eminently gifted, or so influentially placed, that they do become a blessing to others, and perhaps extensively so; but, if the blessing of Abraham really comes on the Gentiles through faith, it must belong to all believers in Jesus, and not only to a few of them. And so, in truth, we take the fact to be. To every believer in Jesus it is said, “Thou shalt be a blessing.” Let us see, first, in what methods this may be made good, and, then, what is the value of the privilege.

1. In what methods may this language be made good?

It is a general fact in the constitution of human society, that every member of it exerts an influence on others. In



this sense it is a universal truth that "none of us liveth to himself" (Rom. xiv. 7). Necessarily brought into domestic or social contact with some, and, almost necessarily, with many, of our fellow-men, we inevitably, by our example and otherwise, exert an influence upon them of some kind, whether good or evil. What kind of influence we exercise depends upon the nature of our example and our conduct; but some influence we infallibly exercise, and we may exert much if we try, and improve our opportunities. A Christian, then, cannot fail in some degree, to be made a blessing, even although the sphere of his influence may be of the narrowest kind. And this in several ways.

First, because he will usefully fulfil the duties of life in every situation in which he may be placed. He will not be an undutiful son, an unkind husband, a negligent father, an unfaithful servant, an oppressive master. In these, and in all other relations of life, he will, as a Christian, act a Christian part, and so fulfil the duties of his position as to realize all the advantages they are intended to secure. Filial duty, conjugal love, parental fidelity, social industry, and benevolence, cannot but be useful; and thus, if not otherwise, every Christian will assuredly be made a blessing.

Secondly, every Christian is sure to be made a blessing, because his example will exercise a beneficial influence. A bad example is universally felt to diffuse an evil influence. The giddy, the passionate, the profane, the profligate, wherever they are, by their very presence do mischief; and in like manner, wherever they are, by their very presence, the upright, the pure, the meek, the heavenly-minded, do good. Their virtues may be said to create an atmosphere favourable to virtue, and unfavourable to vice. They rebuke sin, they commend religion, they invite to imitation. They shine as lights in a dark place.

Thirdly, every Christian is sure to be a blessing, because he is both able and apt to improve the opportunities of doing good which every situation presents. For we say, without fear, that every situation presents *some* opportunities—some more and some less, but every one *some* opportunities—of doing good. And a Christian is not an ignorant man, not knowing how to do good; he is not a self-indulgent man, not caring to do good; he is not an unfeeling man, indifferent to the wants of those around him: on the contrary, he is the

very opposite of all this ; a man of feeling heart, of ready self-denial, of spiritual wisdom ; just the man who cannot see opportunities of doing good without being stirred up to embrace them, and who carries with him everywhere the spiritual wisdom to meet the needs he finds.

Thus a Christian, let him be placed where he may in human society, cannot but be made a blessing.

We may go beyond this, however, and, referring to the arrangements of divine providence, may say, that every Christian is placed where he is in order that he may be made a blessing.

It was evidently so in the case of Abraham. Had he been left in Ur of the Chaldees, and in the house of his father, he would not have become such a means of blessing, either to his posterity, or to the world. It was not an accident that made him so ; but his position was chosen for him, and he for his position. Nor was it less evidently so with other illustrious characters of Old Testament history. Noah, Moses, and David, were men for the places which they filled, and each of them was put in his place in order that he might fill it to the greatest advantage. And that which we may observe in conspicuous instances is undoubtedly the rule of divine providence. Although less manifest to human eyes, it cannot be doubted that every man, even in the most ordinary spheres of life, has his special aptitude and adaptation to the activities of life, and is placed where they may most powerfully, or most fruitfully, be called into operation. And thus in the providential location of his people God secures that they shall be a blessing, by placing them in circumstances which they have a special fitness to occupy, and where opportunities of beneficial action abound.

2. Let us now inquire, in the second place, what is the value of this prerogative : "Thou shalt be a blessing."

It is a happiness which may well make us contented in any circumstances, however adverse. It is readily to be admitted, that many positions in life are sufficiently disagreeable, and call on the Christian for strenuous exercises of resignation ; but yet the thought is cheering, that, while no situation can deprive a Christian of his personal blessing, so none can deprive him of his relative blessing. He may—if he act a Christian part, he shall—be made a blessing any-

where, and where he is especially; more so than he might be if his circumstances were of a more agreeable kind. He need not, therefore, repine at affliction, or pine after worldly prosperity. Let it comfort him that, in the absence of this, he may still be a blessing, and may find in his sorrows some special adaptation to his usefulness.

It is a happiness which should be ranked among the highest in any circumstances, however prosperous. Doubtless prosperity is pleasant, and it is sweet to enjoy; but it is sweeter to be made a blessing than even to be blessed. The latter is a selfish luxury; the former is a generous one. It is even Godlike; for to communicate is, in the highest sense, God's prerogative. O! 'tis more happy to be made "a blessing" than to roll in wealth, or to revel in luxury.

It is a happiness to be highly valued because of its security in all circumstances. Some of our pleasures are occasional—either in their nature transient, or liable to interruption by the change of our circumstances; this, however, is a happiness for all seasons, and adapted to resist the influence of all changes. A Christian may be a blessing in health or in sickness, in wealth or in poverty, in joy or in sorrow. No condition robs him of all his opportunities, while almost, if not quite, every one supplies opportunities peculiar to itself, and spiritual wisdom is capable of turning all to account.

It is a happiness to be highly valued because of its associated pleasures. If, by being made a blessing, we reach the greatest enjoyment of our own life, we hereby come to live also in the hearts of others. How the name of Abraham has been revered by his posterity! His being made "a blessing" endears him to many generations. And when a Christian is made a blessing, what fervent love, what touching gratitude, is returned into his own bosom! So children learn to recompense the self-denying toils of parents, who thus come to live a second and sweeter life in the hearts of those to whom their first life has been devoted. No love is more fervent, no gratitude is more touching, than that of those to whom we have been spiritually useful. It is an element of pure enjoyment in this world, and it will contribute not imperceptibly to the happiness of the world to come.

These are some aspects of the believer's privileges upon

whom "the blessing of Abraham" comes: "Thou shalt be a blessing."

Let us make an application of these thoughts, in the first place, to the past. Wherein we have lived as Christians, we may hope that this promise has been fulfilled to us, and fulfilled much beyond the scope of our actual knowledge. Yet in some degree, perhaps, we may be able to trace the fact. Instances may be known to us, and perhaps not a few, in which God has made us blessings. Our families, our social circles, our Sabbath school classes, our domestic visits, supply us with illustrations not to be overlooked. Let us praise God for them. He has given us a high prerogative.

Let us make an application of these thoughts, in the second place, to the present. To be made a blessing is a Christian's privilege. Is it a privilege after which we, as Christians, are aspiring? Or are we content with being blessed, without expecting to be made a blessing? Ah! my brethren, it is possible that we may have given too little attention to this branch of our privilege. Perhaps some of us have never even thought of it in the light in which it has now been set before us, or have even made it a part of our Christian aim and purpose. When did we cultivate a fervent desire to be useful? When did we endeavour to give such a desire any practical effect? Whom have we endeavoured to convince of sin, and to bring to Jesus? Alas! sad negligence, and sadder forfeiture of our highest privilege!

And what is our feeling, our purpose, now? Is a desire to be useful stirred within us? Shall we be found devoutly examining our position in order to ascertain our opportunities, and making up our resolution to a prompt improvement of them? Come, let us arouse ourselves. It is long enough that we have slumbered. Through Jesus Christ "the blessing of Abraham" comes upon us. Let us not reject one half—in some sense, the better half—of our privilege. If we rejoice to be, like Abraham, blessed, let us aspire to be, like Abraham, "a blessing."

Let us make an application of these thoughts, in the third place, to the future. Neither portion of Abraham's blessing fully develops itself in the experience of the believer now. Not yet does he entirely know how richly he is blessed; still less completely does he know how abundantly he is made a blessing. Much of this is concealed, or yet unaccomplished,

but none of it is to fail, or to be finally hidden. Every instance in which God makes his people a blessing is known to him, recorded on high, and every one shall at length be known to us all. O, the strange, the glad, discoveries of the coming day! Then only shall the fulness of Abraham's blessing be made manifest; and then may it be manifest, too, that upon us, through Jesus Christ, the fulness of Abraham's blessing has come!

## HYMN.

How blest, if thou, my God, become  
My portion, and my guide;  
And lead me to thy heavenly home,  
Where every tear is dried.

More blest a blessing to be made—  
For so thy promise stood;  
In joy and sorrow, light and shade,  
Like thee, a source of good.

Fulfil this gracious word to me!  
To it my heart aspires;  
And, if in ways of mystery,  
'Tis all my heart desires.





LECTURES ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.



## WHAT CONSTITUTES A TRULY HAPPY LIFE?\*

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THE question proposed for our consideration is in these words—What constitutes a truly happy life?

A question, I take it for granted, appealing to you all to-night, not only for a kind, but for an interested, attention. Certainly no question can be either more natural, or more important; and that for several reasons.

I say this question is natural and important, in the first place, because of the capacity which we have for happiness. That capacity requires to be provided for, like any other.

And, in the second place, it is so because we have our happiness to seek. We have a capacity for happiness in common with all sentient beings; the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, the fishes of the sea, have in their measure a capacity for happiness, as well as ourselves; but in this we differ from them, that their happiness comes to them—we must go after ours. The happiness that is suited to their faculties and capacities God gives them without their seeking it; God has so made *us* that, if we attain happiness, we must exercise our understanding and our active powers in search of it. And therefore I say it is a very just and a very important inquiry for us who have such a life to live; what will render it happy?

It is natural and important, in the third place, because without great care we are very likely to miss of happiness. It is by no means certain that we shall find the road to it. Our impulses may lead us in one or in another direction; we may discern various attractions, and hear various persuasives from various quarters; but it is not at all certain that any

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\* A Lecture delivered at Albion Chapel, London, on Tuesday evening, December 8th, 1840.

one of these will lead us to what is truly happy. They may be deceitful guides; they may be treacherous persuaders. And, if we do not exercise our understanding and common sense in fair, and honest, and searching, inquiry what will really make us happy, there are a hundred probabilities—I may say, there are a thousand probabilities—there is almost a certainty—that we shall fail of attaining it.

And, in the fourth place, if we do fail of attaining happiness the consequences cannot but be very serious. To live is itself a serious matter. There is in the life of every one of us a very serious expenditure; an expenditure of the energies of our own bodies and minds. Our thoughts, our feelings, our active powers, are *spent* in the course of life; and these are all of them far more precious than gold. The expenditure of the faculties and energies of the life of a human being, is greater than can be counted in any treasure beside that is known to man; and to spend all this—so much feeling, so much action, so much energy—and not to gain happiness by it, is itself a most lamentable waste of life, a species of prodigality that cannot be too much deplored. Life spent cannot be recalled. If spent once in vain, it is spent altogether in vain. And, if we fail in life of being happy, there are a thousand probabilities that we become miserable. A man not happy may be said, in truth, to be necessarily miserable; for, with the appetite for and cravings after happiness, and the capacities for happiness, characteristic of us, such capacities, and appetites, and cravings, cannot be unsatisfied without wretchedness being the result. Inasmuch as there must be wretchedness resulting from the appetite of hunger unsatisfied, or the appetite of thirst unsatisfied, so an unsatisfied appetite for happiness must of necessity occasion misery. But that is not all. If our energies and active powers are not employed successfully in the pursuit of happiness, there are infallible and multiplied sources of misery. Indeed, it may be certainly affirmed that, if we do not attain true pleasures, we shall plunge ourselves into many sorrows. There is no such thing as a neutral life, a life neither happy nor miserable; but he that would secure himself against spending a life in the laborious accomplishment of his own wretchedness, must see to it that he finds, and pursues, the way whereby he may become truly happy.



In point of fact, it is an element of the most ordinary, the most obvious, the most indispensable, wisdom, that every human being should pause, and ponder, and ask himself, What will make me happy? If there be any one that yields himself heedlessly to the passions of his nature, if there be any one that gives himself up to the attractive scenes and persuasive voices that he may hear and behold around him on every side, without ever asking, Which of these can make me happy? that man is a fool, unworthy of the very name of man. He perpetrates suicide, he dies by his own hand, and gives himself up to influences that will issue in misery and destruction. If there be any common sense in man, it should lead him to pause as he enters into life, to ponder well the situation in which he is placed and the circumstances he sees around him, and to do nothing that shall involve the character of his condition, until he can find what he may do with a probability, with a certainty, of becoming truly happy.

Now the question before us being thus both natural and important, appealing for an interested and a serious consideration to the mind of every rational being, we take it up: What constitutes a truly happy life?

I. It may be proper, in the first place, to take it up (technically speaking) negatively: that is to say, to make this observation—that our happiness does not consist in the absence of all causes and sources of suffering.

It might seem, upon a cursory observation of the state of men, that they are made miserable by their sorrows. A very great many sources of sorrow and suffering to men there are, both external and internal, both caused by others and originating with themselves; and one might be ready to say—If you could but remove men from these various causes of sorrow, if you could but dry up their tears, then as a matter of course, and of direct necessity, they would be happy. Now we cannot admit this principle. Even if we could dry up all the tears of men, and get rid of the sources of sorrow, still we should have to take up the question anew—What will produce happiness?

But yet there is something in the observation which has been made which deserves our attention before we proceed. Of course, all suffering is so far adverse and contrary to happiness; but, nevertheless, there are many sources of suffering by which happiness may not be wholly destroyed,

or even be materially interfered with. In truth, *suffering* and *happiness* are not properly antithetic terms. *Suffering* and *enjoyment* may be said to be antithetic terms: but enjoyment is not necessarily *happiness*, nor is happiness necessarily inconsistent with some kinds of suffering. There are some kinds of suffering—say, for example, pain, and weakness, and so forth, resulting from disease—which, although they reduce enjoyment for the time, may nevertheless not be destructive of happiness; that is to say, there may be happiness in spite of them—happiness rising above them. A great deal of physical suffering of many kinds may be endured without destroying happiness possessed, as arising from different quarters and sources. Nay, there are some kinds of suffering which oftentimes minister to happiness, both by the pouring in (in connexion with them) of a joy springing from heavenly sources, and by calling into exercise some of the noblest affections of the heart. On this principle I suppose it is that martyrs at the stake have been happy; ay, and happier at the stake than amidst scenes of previous tranquillity and repose.

But, while we make this observation, we have to say, also, that there are some sources of suffering the existence of which is entirely incompatible with happiness. There are two elements of suffering which are, also, absolute elements of misery—which are inseparable from misery; and without the removal of them from our being the notion of possessing happiness is utterly preposterous and vain.

In the first place, no man can be happy with an accusing conscience. We stand as before our own presence to be judged; God has so implanted conscience within us—the capacity of moral judgment, perpetually in exercise upon our own conduct as well as upon the conduct of others—with a voice speaking such conscious truth, and speaking so loud, and with so much of the dignity of God on whose behalf it speaks—that there is no possibility of man being happy apart from conscious rectitude, apart from a peaceful and approving conscience. I know there may be many cases in which conscience is very much seared and stupefied, and very feebly does its duty; but I am entitled to speak now of conscience as well informed and fully enlightened—of conscience as pronouncing with decision, with loudness, and with power. And we all know what cases

have arisen in the history of mankind, and how many those cases have been, in which it has been demonstrated that conscience has a power utterly destructive of human happiness by its own rebukes alone; so that men—ay, and men of no mean grade, too—have absolutely wished themselves to be the very dogs of the streets, that they might escape from this accusing and condemning judge. Men, by the power of conscience, have been pushed sometimes to the fearful alternative of rushing into eternity unfit—even committing suicide, and plunging into greater sorrow in the desperate resolve to escape from the less. Now, while there is this power—a power which we carry about us, whose voice we cannot silence, from whose rebukes and presence we cannot for one moment escape—it matters not what else we have; if we have an accusing conscience we cannot have happiness. Neither wealth nor pleasure, neither ambition, nor mirth, nor gain, nor prosperity of any kind, can compensate for this one element of misery; and, unless a man will first of all be at peace with himself, the very notion of being happy is altogether preposterous.

And, in the second place, no man can be happy with an angry God. There is a vital and essential relation between the approbation and friendship of God and the happiness of every man. Men may forget God—men *do* very commonly forget God, but God does not forget them: and when God shall be pleased to open upon the soul of any man a sense of his disapprobation and displeasure, he will do that which shall bid defiance to that man to be happy. The sense of God's wrath upon the heart is like the scorching sun upon the green herb; it withers all the freshness of pleasure and enjoyment away. The stroke of God's anger is like the flashes of the lightning, or the voice of the thunder. There are indications of wrath in it fearful and destructive; and he that hath the sense upon his soul of an angry God may bid adieu to all that he can call happiness, or peace. It is the great, all-absorbing, element of misery; annihilating, as it were, all things beside.

Now, therefore, let every one who would be happy see that he rids himself of these two sources of misery. This is a preliminary step. We have this to settle before we can fairly, and upon clear grounds, even take up the question, What constitutes a truly happy life? The removal of these

two causes of essential, incurable, wretchedness is a necessary preliminary step to the acquisition of any happiness.

II. We come, then, to take up the subject positively, and the question, What constitutes a truly happy life? I may suppose that a man is standing before you, from whom there are removed these two elements of misery—who hath peace of conscience, and peace, not only with himself, but also with God; what will make him happy?

Now happiness, looking at the expression in its widest sense, is a term that has relation to all sentient beings—or all beings that feel. Everything that feels may, according to its nature and capacity, its instincts and habits, be happy or miserable—the subject of pleasure or pain. And, viewing the term in this general light, as having a relation to all sentient beings, happiness is simply this—A state congruous with the faculties and capacities of the being that may be under consideration.

If you apply this idea to the inferior creatures, the brute creation from the highest down to the very lowest, their happiness lies in being in a state congruous with their faculties, and instincts, and appetites. This is all the happiness of which they are capable. It is happiness to them. And the contrary of this would be to them a source of suffering, or of unhappiness. And this same general idea is to be taken up as applicable to ourselves. Happiness is, to us, a state congruous with our faculties and capacities.

We have, then, to make inquiry what are the faculties and capacities of man?

Some faculties and capacities we have in common with the brute creation. The appetites of hunger and of thirst, the impulses and powers of locomotion, and various physical impulses, we have in common with the inferior creatures. But we have also faculties and capacities *not* in common with them; which make us a very distinct class, and raise us far above them. Their faculties and capacities are all adapted either to the protection of the individual, or to the propagation of the species; we, beyond these faculties and capacities, have the faculties of voluntary thought, and feeling, and action, the exercise of the affections, and of activity for the promotion and accomplishment of objects which are altogether removed from them. Our happiness, therefore, lies in being in a state congruous with these our principal, most prominent, most powerful, faculties and capabilities.



Now these may be resolved into two; we have faculties of affection, and of action. We can love, and we can labour. These capacities and faculties are with us by far the most exalted and powerful that we have; they very far take precedence of all that relates to any other parts, or aspects, or functions, of our being; and, in order to be happy, therefore, we must be in a state of well-directed affection, and of well-directed action.

1. To take up first this idea of well-directed affection. It is very easy to see that ill-directed affection must be a source of disappointment, and of misery. Love misplaced makes a wretched heart. And that our affections, therefore, in their strong and supreme exercise, should be directed to suitable and worthy objects is evidently a necessary element of our true happiness.

Let it be remarked, then, what the properties of the object should be to which the affection, or supreme love, of man can be worthily and happily directed. I will name but two.

(1). In the first place, if our love be well directed, it must be directed to objects that will requite it. Love is bestowed; but it asks a return. Unrequited love is always love disappointed. If we say to an object, "I love you"—it is in the hope of hearing the reply, "And I also return your love." There is a craving of the heart after this, and nothing less can satisfy it.

Now it is manifest from this consideration how very wide of the mark of yielding any true happiness is the love exercised by many; for the love of many is directed to objects that cannot requite it. For example: men who love money, who set their supreme affection upon wealth in any of its various forms, upon being men of substance and acquiring large possessions. What an absurd passion is this! Why, money—money in its various forms—what is it? It is represented, either by a few pieces of glittering metal, or by a few pieces of paper written upon with a few letters, or by a few pieces of parchment with a seal or two upon a piece of red tape, or by a few acres of green fields, or a few hundreds or a few thousands of trees, or by a few heaps of bricks and mortar in the shape of mansions; and what things are these to love! To love? why, there is not one of them that can look you in the face; there is not one of them that can give you a smile; there is not one of them that can return your



affection. You are loving inanimate things that have no emotions. You might as well be embracing a corpse—binding a chill, dead body to your bosom. To love such things as these, is to torture and to crucify all the best and strongest affections of the heart.

I acknowledge, indeed, very cheerfully, that a man makes a much wiser choice than this for the supreme setting of his affections, who yields his heart to the love of his fellow-creatures. *There is* something—something that goes to requite the affection that we bestow—when the love that glistens in our eye engages a smile for the recompense of it, and the pulsations of our own heart come to kindle pulsations in the heart of another of equal warmth. To love and to be loved hath in it the essence and the principle of happiness. So far there is wisdom. But then, after all, what object is there which can fully requite our supreme love? Subordinately, the delights of friendship and sincere affection, as in relation to earthly objects, are to be spoken of with the very highest commendation; but, if we come to set our supreme affection, our idolizing affection, upon earthly objects of love, we find at once that they are insufficient to recompense the amount of affection that we pay. They want resources; they want fulness. There is a weakness—emptiness—feebleness—about all earthly objects of love, which makes them poor in comparison of the recompense that we need and desire for our supreme affection. For there is something in the goings forth of our love which is of the character of weakness—of the nature of emptiness—of poverty; we feel ourselves wanting, deficient in something which we seek to supply by engaging, in return for our own affection, the love of the object towards which we look. We want something to lean upon, to support us, to console us, to protect us; some addition to ourselves, to make up and compensate for our own weakness and insufficiency. And, when we go to lay the weight of this weakness and dependence upon a fellow-creature, we feel that we have laid the stress upon a foundation that does not sustain us. Our fellow-creatures are weak and feeble as ourselves. They lean upon us, we lean upon them; and how often we feel that both are feeble, and that neither the one nor the other can render the support and consolation which a feeble, and aching, and wearied, heart demands! There is no repose for

the heart, but in a being that hath at command all-sufficient, all-powerful, resources. We in our weakness want to cleave to that which is strong; in our emptiness we want access to that which is full; in our liability to sorrow we want access to a fountain of joy. In truth, there is no creature that contains what we do want; and, for idolizing affection to be fixed upon any creature is but leaning on a feeble staff, which breaks in our grasp, and pierces, first our hand, and then our very heart too.

The truth is, that the heart of man wants access to God. *There* is the strength, the fulness, the fountain of consolation, upon which we can lean; and it is in loving him and being loved by him—in the supreme affection set upon God himself, the all-glorious, the all-sufficient, the all-bountiful—it is in that affection alone that the heart of man can rest. There is no recompense for man's love but in God's love; nothing that can fill man's heart but the friendship of his Maker.

(2). And, as I have said, in the first place, that the object to which our affection must be directed, if well-directed, must be one that will requite it, so I say now, in the second place, that it must be one of a permanent and durable kind. The heart of man cannot change its love. There are, indeed, slender affections, which are in their course like the butterfly, flitting from thing to thing, attracted first by one beauty and then by another; but we do not dignify these by the name of *love*. These are fancies. Man's best love cannot change its object. Where the heart is fixed it remains. It is for no novelty. And, in cases in which it is bereaved of its best beloved object, instead of going forth to kindle itself upon a successor, it is the language of the desolate heart—"The world now contains nothing for me."

Ah! on such a principle, what a dreadful thing it is to love mortal friends!—friends that turn pale and die while we look upon them!—friends that are dear to our hearts, indeed, and we to them, but upon whose pale faces we have to look on the bed of death, and to follow them in mute sadness to the grave! To love such objects as these—to fix a strong and supreme affection upon things that die, that are not sure to be in our embrace for an hour—to set our greatest affection upon things that are falling into the grave—oh! it is a dreadful mistake. And many a lacerated heart testifies to it; and many a mourner, as they "go about the

streets," or sit solitary in habitations where once conjugal and domestic love shone upon the scene, can say—"I idolized the world; I made an idol of my husband, my wife, my children, my friends: the world is like a world without a Deity to me now—dark and blank—and I am hopeless and unloved."

Ah! there is no wisdom in setting the supreme affection anywhere but upon a permanent object. If you can find a friend that will live throughout your life, only ending his being then, and in his excellences and qualifications unchangeable—*love him*. "Yea, I say unto you," *Love him*. There is but one such friend. And that is—your MAKER.

2. To turn, then, to the second particular; and to speak of well-directed activity. This also, I have said, is a necessary element of happiness.

It is well known that our impulses of activity are strong and instinctive. We cannot help it. Made for contemplation, in part, we are; but not for contemplation wholly. No hermit ever was happy; no man ever can be happy as a hermit. We are made for activity. We must be, and shall be, always doing something, either right or wrong, either good or evil. And the proper direction, therefore, of our active powers comes into consideration as an element of happiness.

Now there are two qualities that must be found in all objects to which our active powers shall be directed, if they are well directed.

(1). In the first place, our activity must be directed to the accomplishment of valuable results. He never can be a happy man who is always busy upon trifles. He that will be labouring to accomplish nothing, or nothing that is of value corresponding with his labour, must always be a man unsatisfied. The accomplishment of some good, useful, delightful, and valuable end—this it is that sweetens toil, and makes one feel recompensed for having undergone it.

Now we may say here, how extremely unsatisfactory and remote from happiness are, in point of fact, many of the pursuits of men! How many, for example, are under the necessity of labouring all their days for the mere providing for their bodily wants, or those of their family! How many have to toil from morning to night, and from the beginning of the week to the end of it—perhaps, from early morning

till late at night, abridging both ends of the night by the light of the lamp—that the few shillings needful may be obtained for the things necessary for the body; and can do nothing else all their life but just “live from hand to mouth,” making two hands work for one mouth, and thankful if, with much toil, they can keep the mouth full. Some in much poverty, others with more considerable supply, but yet labouring all their lives are an immense number of persons for just providing the things needful for the body. I am not saying that this is wrong; but what I am saying is, that it is a most unsatisfactory way of spending life in reference to happiness. Here is no great and valuable end accomplished; but, in fact, one of the least valuable and most common ends. This is just doing by great labour what the beasts of the field do without any labour at all; they eat, and they drink, and are nourished, and go through their life without working; and for us to have to work hard all our life long for that which the beasts of the field obtain without any labour at all, is enough to make one’s heart ache, and bring one to say in disgust, “Wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?” One wants something assuredly far higher than this, to which the active energies of life may be devoted.

There are, certainly, some persons privileged to accomplish higher ends than these; persons who, instead of thus labouring for their living, are released from that necessity by a kind Providence, and have opportunities for devoting their strength and activity to other ends—scientific ends—humane, patriotic, benevolent ends—or some of the many interesting and important objects presented to the activity of men. These have so far a happier life than those to whom it is not permitted to engage in such pursuits. But, after all, there is nothing in these objects—patriotic, benevolent, scientific—large enough to satisfy the cravings of man’s heart. There are aspirings and longings to do, there are capabilities in man’s heart of doing, something beyond all this. How very little, for example, any one man feels that he can do for the benefit or improvement of the world! Here we find ourselves in the midst of a world presenting thousands of necessities; hospitals, schools, a thousand institutions of good, are wanted all around us; over large portions of the world a state of barbarism prevails, the oppression of slavery continues,

and everywhere through the whole earth there are opportunities for benevolent enterprise; and yet let any one see what through a whole life he can do for removing the miseries of men! He is, as it were, a grain of sand upon the seashore—*nothing* in his individual capacity towards staying the inroads of the ocean. There is, therefore, in all these things a littleness, an unsatisfactoriness, to the mind of man devoted to them. There is something wanting to constitute an object really worth living for; and one that shall not be confined to the privileged few, but can be taken up by all men, by the poor as well as the rich, by the man that works for his bread sixteen hours out of the twenty-four as well as by the nobleman at his ease. We want something that shall be presented to man *as man*, and shall be presented to him as a great and noble object to be pursued with his loftiest powers.

There is no object that possesses these qualities but the service and glory of God. He that will glorify God will pursue a great and noble object indeed. He will do that which God himself has undertaken for his own work. He will do that which the Son of God took for the great object of his life. He will do that which saints and angels in heaven do. They all glorify God. And an object of greater value and more paramount excellence cannot be embraced by man. This is an object for peers and ministers of state, for men of science and benevolence, to grasp at; and more than that—this is an object for the poor, the wretched, the distressed, the degraded, the overworked, everywhere, to grasp at. There is not a man so poor but he may aim to glorify God. It is only a question of purpose; and there is not one so poor, there is not one so distressed, that he may not grasp this object, and in his measure pursue it—an object identical with that of God himself.

(2). In the second place, activity, to be well directed, must be directed to an object yielding happiness in its pursuit. It is true, indeed, that the accomplishment of a valuable object may make amends for an unhappy course pursued in attaining it; but, nevertheless, happiness is evidently far more complete, if, while we are pursuing an important and valuable object, the pursuit of the object itself calls forth affections of a noble and delightful kind.

In this respect a great many objects of earthly pursuit altogether fail. For example, observe the miser, who lives



in greedy pursuit of wealth; what a contracted, selfish, miserable temper and habit of mind the very pursuit of wealth cherishes! If wealth were worth a thousand times what it is, the wretchedness and misery endured in the pursuit of it would still deserve to be reckoned intolerable. So, look at the sensualist—the man that goes after sensual delights; think of the wretched and miserable affections he keeps alive and nourishes: or at him who seeks pleasure in the indulgence of eating and drinking—drinking especially; how much suffering and wretchedness is occasioned by his pursuit! It is so with all the variety of earthly pursuits. Inferior passions are awakened in the occupation.

But if any man will pursue the glory of God, he shall not only pursue an object of the greatest value, but shall awaken in his heart affections of the highest felicity. O! the rectitude within—O! the tranquillity and peace of conscience—O! the internal approbation, the self-satisfaction—of the man who can say, “My heart is for God, my life is for God! Whether I eat or drink, or whatsoever I do, I do all to the glory of God!” O! the generous love—O! the crucifixion of selfishness—O! the going out of self, the absorption of self in the glory, and excellency, and interest, and honour, of another—the drinking into God’s own spirit—the identity of heart with himself—the partaking of his own felicity! Generous, holy, noble, exalted, feelings thrown into the very midst of life’s ordinary affairs; attaching a celestial character even to the drudgery of earth; giving a sacred, spiritual, ennobling, influence to all that is done, even of the meanest kind; enabling the ploughman at the ploughtail to live like an angel—or the artisan at the loom, or the maidservant in her work (it matters not who, it matters not where), to live like an angel, and to be cultivating in this world all those noble affections that make heaven so beautiful, and so blessed!

Here, then, is the sum of the whole matter; that well-directed affection and well-directed activity are the main, essential, complete, elements of human happiness. There is no happiness without them; there can be no misery with them—the two elements of misery, an accusing conscience and an angry God, being first removed out of the way.

And now, to bring this discourse to a conclusion, let me

ask you, dear friends, in the first place, what course it is that you who now hear me have been pursuing. You are capable of happiness. You have happiness to acquire; it will not come unless you seek it. You are in the midst of a thousand elements of delusion, and are called upon by the strongest motives to think and to choose aright. Tell me what course have you hitherto been pursuing? Have you a conviction that the object you have before you as a worthy object of pursuit is really so? Does your judgment approve it? Are you satisfied that it deserves your supreme affection, and your best energies? Or are there not some of you who have been seeking happiness in other ways—in any other way than this? Some of you, perhaps, seeking happiness in the indulgence of your passions and appetites; others of you, it may be, seeking it you hardly know how—saying, “Who will show us any good?” and trying first one and then another source of enjoyment, heedlessly running on without wisdom, and without success? Now are you not weary of this vain pursuit? Will you go on squandering away a precious life, a noble heart, and generous faculties, as though they were nothing, in the thought of being happy—but in the consciousness of being miserable? Say, if you have sought happiness in any lower source than that to which I have pointed, whether you have found it. In intemperance? have you not been told, “It is not in me”? In sensuality? did it not say, “It is not in me”? In covetousness? hath it not said, “It is not in me”? In ambition? said it not, “It is not in me”? And all the flatterers that wooed and won you on in paths of earth-born pursuits, one by one they have fallen away and deserted you, and left you in bitter mockery to gain your experience of wisdom, and your reality of sadness. Oh! *is it* experience of wisdom that you gain? And seeing where happiness truly is, do you say, “This shall be my good; happiness is here, and I embrace it”?

O! if you do, thank God for the Gospel which presents it. I have read no passage of Scripture to-night; I took no text for my discourse; I have not quoted a text as any manner of proof, or authority for anything that I have stated. I have spoken, indeed, with that glorious light which the blessed book of God throws upon all subjects of morals and sound reasoning, but I have spoken simply to common sense; I have spoken as to infidels, to men who acknowledge not

the Bible, and I have made my appeal to nothing but common sense: I call upon every man for nothing more in this matter, than to be guided in it by the same common sense and plain understanding which guide him with success in the ordinary affairs of life. But O! if you see that this is happiness and will embrace it, thank God for the Gospel which puts it within your reach. I told you of the rebukes of a guilty conscience: thank God for the precious blood of Christ, which "cleanseth from all sin;" thank God that you hear the invitation—"Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." I told you of the necessity of having peace with God: thank God for the Gospel, which bids you "acquaint yourselves with him and be at peace," since he "so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." O unbeliever! O infidel! O sceptical man! O boaster of philosophy! come, love the Bible; come, prize the Gospel. It speaks to your inmost mind—it provides for your deepest wants—and it is the only method in which you can find security for present, or for future, joy.

I will only say, in conclusion, that as many of us, dear brethren, as know the excellency and power of the Gospel should learn to remember wherein the real happiness even of religion consists. It is a blessedness—I will not deny it—to have sin forgiven, the wrath of God removed, and conscience at peace; *it is* a blessedness, but it is not all the blessedness we want. We cannot live as in a hermitage, in a state of mere peace with God and enjoyment of a tranquil conscience. The true happiness of a Christian lies in well-directed affections and well-directed activity. Let your supreme love be fixed upon God, your Father—your supreme dedication be to his service and his praise. Otherwise you will lose your happiness still; lose it as truly as the worldling loses it. If you, in your state of spiritual peace and safety, indulge a spirit of worldly love and worldly pursuit, you throw away the very jewel that God has given you. And, if it be madness for a worldling to throw it away, it is more utter madness for *you* to throw it away, into whose possession it has been so graciously put, and who have the utmost facilities for knowing the infinite amount of its excel-

lency. Let "your affections be set on things above," Christian; "not on things on the earth." Of all objects pursue the glory of God as the first. Do not yourself renounce that only happiness—the living to his praise. "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all things to his glory."

## THE PREDICTIONS OF MOSES CONCERNING THE JEWS.\*

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Is the Bible true? Or, rather, is the Bible what it professes to be—truly the word of God?

This, if I understand it aright, is the main question that we have before us. And, certainly, a question of greater importance cannot be entertained. If the Bible be not what it professes to be, let every Christian, and every Christian minister, combine with all other people of common sense to despise it, and trample it under foot; if it be a fallacy, class it with other fallacies and forgeries by which the world has been beguiled for a while, but which, as children their toys, successive generations have outgrown. But, if the Bible be true, if it truly be what it professes to be—the word of God, treatment the very opposite of neglect and contempt is demanded for it from the hands of every rational man, be he saint or sinner, Christian or sceptic. A very solemn book it is, if it be a true one; a very persuasive, a very influential one. It reveals a world to us of glorious and awful realities, well fitted by their magnitude and their lustre to throw all the world we know besides into the shade.

It is as a branch of this general question, Is the Bible true, or truly what it professes to be?—that we have before us more specifically this inquiry, Is any evidence of the truth of the Bible furnished by its predictions of future events? You have had several discourses upon prophecy—Scripture prophecy; one opening the general probability and design of prophetic declarations, and others tracing successive portions and aspects of the prophecies of Holy Writ: upon

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\* A Lecture delivered at Bishopsgate Chapel, London, on Tuesday evening, December 7th, 1841.



this principle, that a book which contains passages pretending to a prophetic character—to foretel future events—contains passages of a very critical character, very apt indeed to put its pretensions to the test. People may say a great many things without any chance of being detected if they be false; but, if people undertake to foretel future events, the time will be sure to come that will prove them either false or true. So with this book, which contains many portions pretending to a prophetic character. It would have been the most hazardous thing in the world to have put these portions into it, if either they themselves had been false, or the book in which they are found, and of which they are an essential constituent, had been a forgery. It would have been like a man concocting a fraud, and putting into his plan elements which would secure his own detection. Some men *are* such fools, but not many; least of all guilty of such folly can we deem the Creator. If, then, it be found that the prophetic parts of this volume, the predictions of future events, are verified completely, so extensively, so consistently, so minutely, as to carry evidence of the inspiration of those portions, then this carries evidence also of the inspired character of the men that uttered them—their authority from God to speak such things—and the divine origin of the entire book of which they are an essential constituent part.

With this same general view—(indeed, I ought to apologize, perhaps, for having in a few words recapitulated it)—with this same general view we look on the present occasion at the predictions of Moses concerning the Jews—a very interesting and very important people, with whom even yet the welfare of the world is marvellously bound up. Many prophecies have had reference to them; you have already had noticed to you those of dying Jacob, those of Balaam, and others.

Now Moses, of whose predictions we are at this time to speak, does not appear conspicuously in the character of a prophet. He was a ruler; he had direct communication with God, from whom he received the entire framework of the national government and system of the Israelites; but he appears rather as a ruler than as a prophet,—rather as a communicator of laws framed and enacted by the Majesty of heaven and King of Israel, than as commissioned from

him to foretel future events. However, although Moses does not appear primarily, or most conspicuously, as a prophet, there are portions of his writings and discourses recorded which are strictly of a prophetic character.

We have one of these in the thirty-third chapter of Deuteronomy; which contains, as it is said, "the blessing wherewith Moses, the man of God, blessed the children of Israel before his death." In this respect Moses partook of that inspiration with which the patriarchs in successive generations were gifted shortly before their departure; favoured with the melody of a heavenly prophetic strain, as it is fabled of the swan that in death she sings. So Jacob, so Joseph, and so Moses, were inspired at the last to foretel that which should happen in later days. If you read through the chapter, you will find that, in a highly poetical strain, the future lot of the several tribes of Israel is depicted. Not that it is easy to trace this in every instance now; the chapter is in many points one little capable of explication; but the general style of it may be gathered from some portions that are very distinct. Thus "of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him, and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders." You know that Benjamin was a tender child, the child of his father's old age, much prized and much beloved; and the position of the tribe in the land of Israel corresponded with the position of Benjamin, the parent of the tribe, in the family of Jacob. "The beloved of the Lord," as the beloved of his father, "shall dwell in safety by him"—a phrase which indicates the position of the tribe of Benjamin next to Judah, and in close contact with the city of Jerusalem. If you will look at any map of the twelve tribes, you will see the large tribe of Judah occupying the southern portion of the land of Judea, and immediately to the north of it the tribe of Benjamin, closely adjoining to the city and fortress of Jerusalem: "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him." So we have concerning Zebulun—"They shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand:" a phrase justly denoting the maritime position of that tribe. Then of Naphtali—"Possess thou the west and the south." Now, although we cannot trace in relation to all the tribes a similar indication, yet there is no doubt that,

in highly poetic and figurative language, the position, or populousness, or fertility, or other characteristics of the several tribes, to be developed in futurity, are presented in this ode; and herein Moses, therefore, is acting fully the part of a prophet.

There is, however, another portion—I was going to say of his writings, but, probably, both of writing and discourse—which has more distinctly still the prophetic character, and upon which it is my design now more particularly to dwell. It occurs twice; once in the twenty-sixth chapter of the book of Leviticus, and more copiously in the twenty-eighth and following chapters of the book of Deuteronomy, the same idea in substance being repeated at a distance of about forty years. It will be necessary to draw a little upon your patience in reading it.

DEUTERONOMY, Chap. xxviii.

“1 And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:

“2 And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God.

“3 Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.

“4 Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

“5 Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.

“6 Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

“7 The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways.

“8 The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in thy store-houses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

“9 The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways.

“10 And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee.

“11 And the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee.

“12 The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work

of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.

“13 And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail: and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them:

“14 And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

“15 But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:

“16 Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field.

“17 Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store.

“18 Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

“19 Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

“20 The Lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me.

“21 The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he have consumed thee from off the land whither thou goest to possess it.

“22 The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew: and they shall pursue thee until thou perish.

“23 And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron.

“24 The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

“25 The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them; and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.

“26 And thy carcase shall be meat unto all fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray them away.

“27 The Lord will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed.

“28 The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart.

“29 And thou shalt grope at noonday as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee.

“30 Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her: thou shalt build a house, and thou shalt not dwell therein: thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not gather the grapes thereof.

“31 Thine ox shall be slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not



eat thereof: thine ass shall be violently taken away from before thy face, and shall not be restored to thee: thy sheep shall be given unto thine enemies, and thou shalt have none to rescue them.

"32 Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people, and thine eyes shall look, and fail with longing for them all the day long; and there shall be no might in thine hand.

"33 The fruit of thy land, and all thy labours, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed alway:

"34 So that thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.

"35 The Lord shall smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore botch that cannot be healed, from the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head.

"36 The Lord shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone.

"37 And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee.

"38 Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather but little in; for the locust shall consume it.

"39 Thou shalt plant vineyards, and dress them; but shalt neither drink of the wine, nor gather the grapes: for the worms shall eat them.

"40 Thou shalt have olive-trees throughout all thy coasts, but thou shalt not anoint thyself with the oil: for thine olive shall cast his fruit.

"41 Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them: for they shall go into captivity.

"42 All thy trees and fruit of thy land shall the locusts consume.

"43 The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low.

"44 He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail.

"45 Moreover, all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenest not unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee:

"46 And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever.

"47 Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things;

"48 Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee.

"49 The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand;

"50 A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favour to the young:

"51 And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy



land, until thou be destroyed: which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee.

“52 And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the Lord thy God hath given thee.

“53 And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee, in the siege and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee:

“54 So that the man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave:

“55 So that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat: because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates.

“56 The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter,

“57 And toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates.

“58 If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, **THE LORD THY GOD**;

“59 Then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance.

“60 Moreover he will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee.

“61 Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will the Lord bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

“62 And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the Lord thy God.

“63 And it shall come to pass, that, as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought: and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it.

“64 And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone.

“65 And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind:

“66 And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life:

"67 In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even ! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning ! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.

"68 And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again : and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you."

#### CHAP. XXIX. 22-28.

"22 So that the generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the Lord hath laid upon it ;

"23 And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath :

"24 Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land ? what meaneth the heat of this great anger ?

"25 Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt :

"26 For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods whom they knew not, and whom he had not given unto them :

"27 And the anger of the Lord was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book :

"28 And the Lord rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as it is this day."

#### CHAP. XXX. 1-8.

"1 And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee,

"2 And shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul :

"3 That then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee.

"4 If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee :

"5 And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it ; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.

"6 And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

"7 And the Lord thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee.

"8 And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the Lord, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day."

These passages comprehend what we understand by "the predictions of Moses concerning the Jews."

But a query arises concerning them, in the first place, whether they can be fairly called predictions. You perceive they are hypothetical: if thou doest this, so and so shall happen—if thou doest the other, so and so shall happen. Here is not, certainly, an absolute prediction of events of either class. But, nevertheless, it must be taken to be as clearly and distinctly a prediction as though it had been an absolute prediction. It might be said, perhaps, that it was natural for Moses, after having organized a form of government for the nation under divine authority, to say, when he was about to leave them, "Now, if you keep the habit of obedience to the laws, you shall prosper, and, if otherwise, you shall suffer adversity," inasmuch as he might calculate on the general course of society, the general tendency and tenor of his institutions, knowing them to be adapted to produce prosperity, if observed, and adversity, if not observed. But declarations of this sort upon the part of Moses would evidently have been much more safely general than specific. And if this passage contained generally a declaration on the part of Moses, "Now, observe these statutes and you will prosper as a nation, neglect them and you will have calamity," one would lay no stress upon it; it was natural that such a thing should be said, and it might be a general calculation. But here is such a great variety of specific and minute details, that Moses could not at all, in the exercise of any common sense, have ventured upon such a thing. How much he foretold, in case they were obedient, of specific prosperity of the seasons! He might know that peace and harmony, and certain elements of national prosperity, would be secured by obedience; but how could he tell that rain from heaven and beneficial seasons should be associated distinctly and constantly with obedience, and the want of them with the contrary? So, of very much respecting diseases also, and other detail. In one place he mentions the king—"The Lord shall bring thee and thy king which thou shalt set over thee" into captivity: why, the Israelites had no king, and it

did not appear that they ever would have a king ; they were several hundreds of years without a king, and a king was no part of their constitution or government, and God was angry when they asked one. It would have been very hazardous to guess such a result as that, and to venture a prediction upon the subject. I might go into other details ; but the whole passage is by far too particular and specific to need it. You cannot help recollecting that declaration concerning the people in the siege of Jerusalem eating their own children. The minuteness of detail sets at defiance all suppositions but this one, that Moses was here, as an inspired person, foretelling, conditionally upon the obedience or disobedience of the parties, the actual results of both.

We give it, then, although a conditional prophecy, as still a prophecy ; and as perfectly a prophecy, and as complete in its evidence and bearings, as though it were not conditional. It is to be regarded as a kind of anticipated history of the Jewish people ; and according as, in their course, we find them obedient or disobedient, so we are to expect to find it realized and fulfilled.

And just so it is. It would be to recapitulate the whole history of the children of Israel, to furnish you in detail with the evidence of the fulfilment of this prophecy. I hope you are all of you well enough acquainted with the writings of the Old Testament, and the history of the Jews, to have felt as I went along how distinctly and literally the prophecy had been fulfilled, the evidence being supplied by your own memory. What fertility, and what multiplication of the people, there was while they were obedient to God—that you remember ; how long famines and droughts were connected with their lapses from God—that you remember too ; how the people that were around them, Philistines and others, had for years together the upper hand of them, and they were cruelly oppressed—that, also, you remember. The captivity in Babylon was distinctly foretold in the passage to which I have already referred : “The Lord shall bring thee and thy king which thou shalt set over thee” into captivity. The description given, too, tallies altogether with their condition during the captivity, both those that were gone into Babylon, and those that remained in their own land.

And after that comes another very distinct and prominent



prediction: "The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth, a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand, a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favour to the young." All commentators are agreed, I believe, that this passage is a prophetic description of the Romans, by whom Judea was ultimately invaded and subdued, and Jerusalem itself destroyed. "A nation of fierce countenance"—depicting the military ardour and frenzy of that warlike people: "from far, from the end of the earth"—that is to say, from a much greater distance than the enemies to which they had been accustomed, Italy and Rome being much farther from Jerusalem than Chaldea, or Egypt, or Assyria, whence their other enemies had arisen: "as swift as the eagle flieth"—the eagle being a fit emblem of the Roman power, inasmuch as it was the standard of the Roman army, and under the same emblem our Lord appears to have made mention of the Roman power in a memorable prediction before his death: "which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favour to the young"—the reckless, barbarous, murderous course of the Roman army being here very fitly depicted. "And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst:" you recollect that by the Roman army Jerusalem was ultimately besieged and taken. And the description here given of what should occur in the siege of the city by the Romans was, as we know from the history written by Josephus, fulfilled to the very letter; it wants only the tense to be altered, and instead of saying the thing *shall be* done, to say the thing *was* done, to turn this whole passage into literal history. The account we have here of that which should be, that among brethren and families there should be an evil eye one towards another, quarrelling for victuals, and not giving to one another, but taking away one from another—was all literally fulfilled in the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman army, so great was the distress; and the account is handed down to us even of "the tender and delicate woman" eating the flesh of her own child, and hiding part of it that she might have a meal on the next day.

The following parts of the prediction correspond altogether and perfectly with the state of the Jewish people, for many



hundreds of years after their dispersion upon the destruction of Jerusalem. What is here stated concerning their oppressed, and scattered, and cruelly-tortured state, "their life hanging in doubt," and so on, is but the very substance of the history of the Jewish people. In Rome, and in various parts of the Roman empire, they were exposed to false accusations continually, and often to hatred so determined as to provoke indiscriminate massacre, in the course of which, in a few years, millions of them were destroyed.

Here is a very singular intimation, also, in the last verse of the twenty-eighth chapter: "The Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again, with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you." Now the fact is that, after the destruction of Jerusalem, the Romans, to get rid of the Jews from Rome, sent them in ships by whole multitudes to Egypt, to be sold for slaves; and there was such a glut in the market of Jewish people to be sold for slaves that no man would buy them. For any man to have hit upon a thing of that sort by conjecture, or to have ventured upon such a prophecy at a guess—either of the two things is incredible.

Equally striking is a passage which I read from the twenty-ninth chapter: "The generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the Lord hath laid upon it, and that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in his anger and in his wrath: even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger?" Why, "the stranger from a far land"—the traveller of Europe, the traveller of England, the traveller of America—goes now to Judea; and here he is depicted, as though his aspect, or his very name, had been written down. He beholds the land desolate and barren, and asks this very question, and receives the very reply which is subjoined.

The last part of the prophecy, which is contained in the

commencement of the thirtieth chapter, relates to a subsequent restoration of the Jews, and is clearly at the present time not fulfilled. But, though it be a little digressing from our immediate argument, you will permit me, as we have the matter before us, to make this observation respecting it: this part of the prophecy establishes, I think, beyond the possibility of reasonable question, the anticipation that the Jews will be restored to their own land. Many passages which seem to indicate this, and which are found in the course of the prophetic books, are set aside as to this meaning by what is called a spiritual, or figurative, interpretation; they are taken to denote the conversion of the Jews, and their great prosperity when blended with the church, and so on. I am not very sure that all that is right; I am a good deal inclined to believe that much which we thus spiritualize ought rather to be taken in its literal import. But there is nothing in *this* passage which it is possible so to interpret; there is nothing here that relates to their spiritual character, neither their wickedness nor their conversion is spoken of. It is a view of their secular condition, their national and temporal affairs and state. And, therefore, as we have found the prophet true when he said, Thou shalt be scattered through all lands, and sold into Egypt, and so on; so, I declare to you, it would take more than all the rest of the Bible to overturn, in my judgment, the third, fourth, and fifth verses of this thirtieth chapter.

With respect, however, to that portion of the prophecy which is fulfilled, we see it in part with our own eyes, and the fact is now before us. The nation of Israel is at this very moment just in the position which is here described. They are now scattered through every nation under heaven, and remaining a people yet; with whatever single (and very few) exceptions, a people so distinct from all other people as to be quite prepared for their gathering together, and their restoration. Never has there been any other case in the whole history of mankind, in which any people banished from their own country, and scattered throughout other nations, have remained distinct. The inhabitants of our own country are a compound—I was going to say, of scores of nations; but all are amalgamated into one mass. So with respect to the United States of America, and other parts of the world very much filled by immigration; general aspects

of distinctness may be found to pervade large breadths of country, but in the United States you could not pick out the Dutch from the German, or the German from the English, or the French from the rest, as you may the Jews from other people in every country where they are, over the whole world.

And this fulfilment of the prophecy which we have before ourselves, is but a part of that series of fulfilments which have been going on now more than four thousand years. It was considerably more than two thousand years before Christ when Moses uttered this prophecy, and now it is nearly two thousand years after him; and here is a course of prophecy in the space of two or three chapters, running on from the time of Moses to the restoration of the Jews to their own land—from the time of Moses to this day, and beyond this (how far beyond we cannot tell)—one continued prophecy, full of minute and specific details, not in a single instance falsified, and in many instances fulfilled!

Now we have just this question to put: Was Moses a good guesser, or was he an inspired man? Why, if I asked this question of the veriest sceptic in reference to any subject but religion, he would tell me this could never be done by guessing; and, if a different answer is given in relation to religion, we are justified in saying that it is because it does relate to religion, and the man does not like to admit anything in favour of religion which he can make any shift to deny.

We set it down, then, that Moses was an inspired man. He spoke with confidence of these remote events, and gave minute details, because God told him what to say. And the whole of the writings of Moses, therefore, are the writings of an inspired man; they profess to be inspired writings, and here is proof and evidence that they are what they profess to be. And he that hears this prophecy of Moses, and sees the fulfilment thereof, and is constrained to acknowledge the inspired character of Moses in consequence of it, is bound to take the whole Pentateuch, read it, and believe it. He that quarrels with the Pentateuch after he admits the inspiration of Moses, is nothing short of a fool, or a knave.

Now religion and the Bible want nothing but common sense, and common honesty. There is no cause in the world which makes so simple, so naked, so direct, an appeal to common sense and common honesty. And there is no man in the world who will be so condemned for either a dishonest man, or a wicked man, in the day of God, as he that questions and rejects the Bible.

## THE ROMISH HIERARCHY IN ENGLAND.\*

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NOTE.—This Lecture was prepared and preached without any reference to the press; and I do not now send it thither without reluctance, inasmuch as there is no pleasure in exposing one's-self to the acerbities of ecclesiastical controversy. The demand for its publication was immediate and general, both among my own friends and among the strangers whom the notice given of it had attracted; and, as I was not ashamed of the sentiments uttered, their importunity prevailed. My compliance was given, however, with the greater readiness, and under a stronger sense of duty, because the sentiments thus adopted by the congregation are now theirs rather than the preacher's. As expressing the opinion of an individual the discourse could have been of little moment; but, as embodying the views of a congregation comprehending, under the circumstances, not a few Dissenters of respectability and influence, it becomes of more importance, and its publication may, perhaps, have some slight influence in stemming the torrent of ecclesiastical frenzy by which, it might seem, the country, including even a portion of the Nonconformist press, is in danger of being carried away. As the Lecture has been written since its delivery, it does not, of course, appear before the public *exactly* as it was preached.

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"I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my counsel, and caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings. . . . The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord."—*Jer.* xxiii. 21, 22, and 28.

I HAVE announced my intention to make some reference this evening to the recent erection of a Romish hierarchy in England; an event certainly of much importance, exciting a lively sensation among all classes of persons, and not so remote from topics of ordinary pulpit instruction as to be altogether unsuitable to this place.

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\* A Lecture delivered at Devonshire Square Chapel, London, on the 3rd November, 1850.



It is, indeed, not a little surprising in this, which has been thought by some to be the age of decrepitude in the papacy, to find a Pontiff—himself, but a few months since, flying from his palace and the imperial city before the hatred of its inhabitants, and restored only by the force of foreign bayonets—coming forth from his apparent weakness to strike a blow which, according to appearances, is to set all England in an uproar.

The view which I now propose to take of the case is two-fold. I shall, in the first place, consider the erection of the Romish hierarchy as a fact by itself; and I shall, in the second place, view it as a part of that system of energetic efforts for the advancement of popery to which it belongs.

I. In the first place, then, I look at the erection of the Romish hierarchy in England as an isolated fact.

And here let me first state what has been done. The Pope has issued a bull constituting in England twelve Romish sees and one archbishopric, with the customary powers of bishops of the Romish church, and with titles derived from some principal place in their dioceses respectively. These twelve suffragan bishops, under their archbishop, form what is called an archiepiscopal province.

Such is the simple fact; and it has created a great sensation, both among Romanists and Anglican churchmen. I shall make a few remarks on the light in which it is viewed by each party.

1. First, as to the light in which this fact is viewed by the Romanists. By them it is largely boasted of. It is represented by the Pope himself as the re-annexation of England to the papacy, and her restoration, as a luminary long darkened, to her orbit in the ecclesiastical firmament. And in accordance with this example is the language held by inferior Romish ecclesiastics.

I cannot but very much wonder at this vaunting. It might surely, in any case, have been held to be indiscreet: since, if a great step were really being taken by Rome, nothing could have been more prudent than to take it quietly and inoffensively; while, on the other hand, the flourish of trumpets which has been actually sounded on this occasion cannot but have a tendency to arouse jealousy and hostility, to an undesirable, if not to an inconvenient, and even to a fatal, degree.

There are, however, two grounds on which, more particularly, I marvel at the loud vaunting of this measure.

(1). The first is, that it is really so small an advance upon what existed before. From such eager glorying one might have thought that there had never been a Romish ecclesiastic in England since the Reformation. The case, however, is not so. In the year 1688, the first year of William and Mary, and contemporaneously with the passing of the Toleration Act, the bulwark of our religious liberty, England was divided by the Pope into four districts by as definite a territorial division as that which now marks out the dioceses; and over each was appointed an ecclesiastic as the Pope's vicar. These ecclesiastics, indeed, were not called bishops, but vicars apostolic; yet they were bishops, and fully authorized to exercise episcopal functions in England, their title, to meet the temper of the times, being taken from some place either wholly imaginary, or in pagan lands. Thus the episcopal appellation of Dr. Wiseman, until now, has been Bishop of Melipotamus. In the year 1840, the four districts, or vicariats, into which England had been divided for the purposes of the Romish see, were again, by a clear territorial line, subdivided, and the number of vicars apostolic was increased to eight.

What, now, has been added to this arrangement? England, instead of being mapped out into eight districts, is mapped out into twelve; the ecclesiastics superintending these districts, instead of being called vicars apostolic, are now called bishops; the districts, instead of being called vicariats, are now called dioceses; and the bishops, instead of deriving their title from an imaginary region, call themselves by the name of an English town. This is absolutely the whole affair. It is nothing but a change of style and title. The Romish ecclesiastical government having existed in England for more than a century and a half in one form, it now exists in another, and in one which seems to have little more advantage over its precursor than this, that it will allow of greater pomp and pretension. That it should afford Romanists some gratification to gaze on the splendid vestments and equipages of their high ecclesiastics is not, perhaps, unnatural, but it is evident that their holy father thinks them yet children, and ready to be pleased with toys.

(2). The second ground on which I marvel at the boast-

ings indulged in on the present occasion, is the absence of what I should have deemed the essential element of what is boasted of. In order to justify the assertion that England is re-annexed to the papacy, one would think that Romanism should have become the religion, either of the state, or of the nation. Neither of these results, however, has been obtained. The number of converts to Rome has, doubtless, within a few years, increased, but no one, I presume, pretends that they are yet the majority of the people; while it is quite clear that the government and the throne of England are, as yet, not Popish, but Protestant. What, then, does the Pope mean by affirming that his erection of Romish bishoprics in England effects the re-annexation of England to Rome? There is, I believe, no other country on earth which is considered as annexed to the papacy on a similar ground.

I take the present boast, consequently, to be both unfounded and ridiculous, a piece of pure gasconade, deserving only of a smile. It may be significant, indeed, of what is desired, and, perhaps (although on a strangely exaggerated view of the symptoms) expected, and, therefore, not without its value: but I cannot regard it as justified by what has been obtained. For a thing done by Jesuits, it has been done less jesuitically than might have been anticipated.

2. I advert now to the light in which the erection of the Romish hierarchy in England is viewed by Anglican churchmen. By them it is loudly complained of, and indignantly resented. And at this also, in some degree, I marvel. But here it will be proper to notice distinctly two grounds of complaint, the one substantial, and the other formal.

(1). The substantial ground of complaint alleged by Anglican churchmen is, that the erection of a Romish hierarchy in England is an infringement of the British constitution, in church and state. It is denounced as a violation of the law, an invasion of the church, an infringement of the prerogative, and a political conspiracy. I will notice these particulars in succession.

That the erection of a Romish hierarchy in England is a violation of the law has not yet been shown. It is evident that the Pope's bull has been carefully drawn up, if not consistently with the spirit of the law, yet so as to avoid a violation of the law; a point in which the Bishop of London has

acknowledged that his rival ecclesiastic has been successful. The law which most nearly touches the case is that which prohibits any ecclesiastical person from assuming the style or title of any Anglican see. Accordingly, no one but the person appointed by the Queen may legally call himself Bishop of London; but it is no breach of this law for any one to call himself Bishop of Southwark. It may, perhaps (although that may be disputed), be contrary to the spirit of the law; but, in practical matters, it is the letter of the law we have to do with, and not the spirit. If, however, upon further search, it should turn out that any Romish ecclesiastic, by assuming the powers conferred by the Pope's bull has violated the law, then the course will be easy. Let the matter be referred to the Queen's Bench, and according to law be decided.

That the erection of a Romish hierarchy is an invasion of the Church of England, is an assertion which, I confess, to me wants proof. It would have been so, indeed, if the Pope had appointed bishops of the Church of England; but he has done nothing of the kind. He has very properly confined himself to appointing bishops of the church of Rome, a church which has had a legally recognized existence in England for a hundred and sixty years, and by none of the appointments within which has the Church of England felt itself aggrieved.

Archdeacon Hale carries this idea so far as to assert that the Pope, by constituting an archbishop of Westminster, has extinguished two of the most ancient archiepiscopal sees in the Western Church: meaning, it is to be supposed, those of Canterbury and York. I must acknowledge that I read these words with astonishment. Does Archdeacon Hale, then, really hold that the Pope has power to effect such a catastrophe? Or has such an appalling fact really taken place? For all that appears to the contrary, the archbishoprics of York and Canterbury still exist, and the right reverend personages appointed to those sees by Her Most Gracious Majesty still enjoy both their emoluments and their honours. May we be permitted to learn from their graces whether they feel themselves at all shaken by the thunder of the Vatican?

The assertion of Archdeacon Hale evidently proceeds on the assumption that the Church of England and the church

of Rome are but two parts of one more comprehensive body, "the Western Church;" but this, surely, is an obvious fallacy. The Church of England, indeed, may be sufficiently lowly—or proud, as the case may be—to acknowledge the validity of Romish orders, and may have the simplicity to expect, in return for such a courtesy, the acknowledgment of her own; but she has never been indulged with this favour. On the contrary, it is well known that the church of Rome has all along considered the Church of England as schismatical and heretical; in accordance with which Dr. Wiseman has recently, in public, spoken of her Majesty as an heretical sovereign. It is clearly, therefore, a matter of mere consistency that the Pope should altogether ignore the Anglican church; and in this view it is quite impossible he should invade it.

This charge, however, is further supported by the allegation that the Pope sets up a claim to territorial dominion in England. But this, even if it were so, is nothing new. The ecclesiastical government which the Pope held in England by his vicars apostolic, was as truly territorial as that which he will now hold by his bishops. For the former he divided the realm, first into four districts, then into eight; and he now divides the realm into twelve districts for the latter. Why is that which has been acquiesced in for a hundred and sixty years to be made on a sudden a matter of crimination and complaint?

I cannot see, however, that the fact is so. It belongs to every church, as such, to make territorial divisions, with a view, not to the ecclesiastical superintendence of the whole region, but to the superintendence of its own members scattered throughout it. Thus Methodism has its circuits, and Presbyterianism its territorial boundaries not less precise. In like manner, the vicars apostolic were appointed to their districts to take charge of the members and interests of the Romish church therein; and to the same object, of course (for I have observed no language to the contrary), are the duties of the new hierarchy confined. Even the ecclesiastical rule of the Anglican bishops is not now strictly territorial. There is, for example, an Anglican bishop of London; but there are multitudes of people in London—I am one of them—over whom he is no bishop, and does not pretend to be so. While every English subject was required



to be a member of the English church, the territorial idea of episcopal jurisdiction might be maintained; but, when English Nonconformity was recognized by law, the government of Anglican bishops was necessarily withdrawn from the surface of the land, and restricted to such part of the population as the Church of England could reckon her own.

The erection of the Romish episcopate in England is further said to be an infringement on the royal prerogative. The Pope, it is alleged, has conferred titles of honour, which the Sovereign alone can properly do. I am not going to call in question the rule that the Sovereign is the exclusive fountain of national honour: the observation to be made is, that the Pope has neither conferred, nor pretended to confer, any title of national honour whatever. The titles he has conferred, although derived from English towns and cities, are, nevertheless, not English titles of honour; that is, they are not, and do not assume to be, on a par with similar titles conferred by the Queen. Such titles conferred by royalty would carry a certain public rank, would require to be acknowledged by all public officers, and would authorize a new signature. The titles conferred by the Pope assume nothing of the kind. The new Romish bishops are not peers of the realm. Dr. Wiseman, although gifted by the Pope with the title of archbishop of Westminster, will not take precedence with the archbishop of Canterbury. No one need use the titles of the Romish bishops unless he pleases, nor can they use their titles as their signature. The bishop of London signs himself, Charles James London; the Romish bishop of Birmingham signs himself, W. B. Ullathorne. The result is that the titles conferred by the Pope are not titles of national honour, but merely ordinary appellations of functionaries in the Romish church, which it is clearly the prerogative of the head of the Romish church to confer.

We are assured, lastly, that the erection of the Romish hierarchy in England is part and parcel of a political conspiracy. Now, if indeed a political conspiracy exists, let it by all means be tracked and frustrated by appropriate political agencies. I must observe, however, that the extension of the ecclesiastical platform of a church existing in a recognized manner in England for so long a period does not bear upon the face of it such a character, and that such a charge ought not to be brought without proof. Nothing,

indeed, is easier than to fling abroad an accusation of this sort, however destitute of foundation, and it has often been recklessly done; but it is a wicked and unmanly proceeding. Dissenters, above all classes of the English community, should beware of lending themselves to an artifice by which we ourselves have severely and unjustly suffered. It is not so very long ago (the sound has hardly yet perfectly died away) that Anglican churchmen loudly maintained the necessary disloyalty of all Dissenters, on the ground that no man who was not a member of the Church of England could be a faithful subject of the realm. In the case both of our fathers and ourselves we know this to have been a libel; but we know also the purpose it was intended to answer. It was to make a body of hated religionists still more hateful. It is only the old artifice of giving a dog a bad name in order to justify the intention of brutally despatching him.

(2). Such are the views I entertain of the substantial injury supposed to be inflicted on the Church and State of England by the erection of a Romish hierarchy within its limits. I now advert, in the second place, to the formal objection which has been alleged against it. It is stigmatized as insolent and offensive. And so, indeed, it is. It is done in a bold, and even audacious, manner, without modesty or decorum: and I cannot at all wonder that it is annoying to Anglican churchmen, and especially to the Anglican clergy of every grade, to the last degree. On this point, however, I submit the following observations.

I observe, in the first place, that this, from the Romish church, is just what was to be expected. It is not at all out of keeping with the character of that church itself, always cringing when it must, and insolent when it dare. Nor is it out of keeping with the feeling it may be supposed to cherish towards the Church of England. Time has been when the Church of England was somewhat saucy towards the church of Rome. She can scarcely have forgotten that she has a long score of insults to repay, or be disposed to do less than repay them with interest. There is, therefore, nothing to be surprised at.

I observe, secondly, that, as a mere matter of offence, it is really of no moment, and that the most dignified course is to bear it with Christian meekness. We are all exposed to insolence occasionally, and only make the matter worse by

fretting at it. Especially may it be consolatory to the Anglican clergy under such a trial, that they still have possession of the substantial good things to the enjoyment of which their ecclesiastical position has introduced them. Had there been any tangible interference with their emoluments, the case would, of course, have been different.

I observe, thirdly, that the resentment now so loudly expressed on the part of the Anglican clergy has very much of an interested aspect. No doubt, the clergy feel very much for the Queen, and for the Constitution; but it is not in human nature that they should not feel also for themselves. And it is remarkable that they exhibit a sensitiveness to the present development of the Romish system altogether singular and unique. Other ecclesiastical platforms have been extended throughout the country without any similar manifestation. There is a Baptist Union of England and Wales, of which I never heard that the bishops expressed any jealousy. There is a Congregational Union of England and Wales of somewhat higher pretensions, but of which I never heard that the bishops expressed any jealousy. There is a Methodist Conference of higher ecclesiastical pretensions still, but of this I never heard upon good authority that the bishops felt any jealousy. There are also Presbyterian Synods of large territorial extent and high church prerogatives, of which I never heard that the bishops expressed any jealousy. Nay, there has been for a century and a half an ecclesiastical platform of the Romish church, of which I never heard that the bishops expressed any jealousy. But the moment another *bishop* appears, the whole Anglican hierarchy start as if they had seen a spectre. Why should this be? The reason is obvious. No other form of ecclesiastical development presents itself in a shape adapted to compete with the Anglican bishop; and he is content because they leave him in his mitred glory without a rival. But now the case is altered. In a Romish bishop he sees his like, his fellow, nay, the very model from which himself was formed. It wears a mitre as well as himself: lawn sleeves, too, and anon it arrays itself in much more splendid garments than his church provides for him, and it will enact the bishop with much more imposing pomp and ceremony than he can ever attain. Hence these griefs, and the doleful cry, "This is too bad!" Why, so, in some sense, it is, and we pity you in your morti-

fication; but there is a littleness in these selfish griefs which will gain small sympathy with the mass of the community.

I observe, fourthly, that, whatever mortification the Anglican clergy may now suffer, they have brought it upon themselves. It is the natural and direct result of that system of church notions generally known as Puseyism. This system originated about twenty years ago, amidst the fears created in the minds of some of the clergy by the introduction and passing of the Reform Bill, and was intended to obstruct the progress of the too liberal ideas then in the ascendant. From that time to the present, efforts have been industriously made to Romanize the Church of England. We all recollect the Tracts for the Times, and their advocacy of apostolical succession and sacramental efficacy. We recollect how one writer after another denounced the Reformation and Protestantism, extolled the Papacy, and cried out for reconciliation with Rome. We have heard, also, of the changes attempted in the services of the church, by preaching in the surplice, by lighting candles, and by multiplied genuflexions at the communion-table, now called the altar. What is the natural effect of all this? With respect to the last particular, the Bishop of London himself suggests that the process, which he affirms to have gone in some cases so far as to give the services of the church an histrionic, or theatrical, character, has favoured the development of Romanism. Nor can the operation of the other causes mentioned be doubted. Their practical influence has been seen in the conversions to the Romish church which have taken place in such considerable numbers, and among persons of such high consideration, both among the clergy and laity. And yet, after all this, the Anglicans innocently express their wonder that the Pope should have thought the clergy and people of England had a leaning towards Rome! It would rather have been marvellous if he had *not* thought so.

I observe, fifthly, that the Anglican clergy may take a lesson now in the nature of clerical assumption as long practised by themselves. They have seemed to make very light of ignoring the existence of the Dissenters, and denying the validity of their orders; but now they come to be served in the same manner, they resent it quickly and warmly. What is the Pope doing now to the Church of England but that which the clergy of the Church of England have long been

doing, and are in many instances doing at this day, to English Dissenters? They have been carrying on their ecclesiastical operations as though the Dissenters did not exist; and now he carries on his ecclesiastical operations as though the Church of England did not exist. They think his conduct arrogant and offensive; what, then, has been their own?

In the sixth and last place, I observe, that the remedy for what is deplored lies by no means on the surface. On this point I turn to Anglican churchmen, and say—Well, gentlemen, you are in trouble; but what would you have? Point out your remedy.

In reply to this, I can conceive it to be said, in the first place, We would have no ecclesiastic allowed to use the style and title of bishop of England. Very well. Then let a law be enacted to attain this object. Then, of course, you will hear no more of the archbishop of Westminster, or the bishop of Southwark. But mark what you will leave behind, and the condition in which you will leave it. You banish the *name* of bishop, but you leave behind the bishop himself; the man, the priest, the vicar apostolic, the working element, and the entire working apparatus, the activity of which is much more to be dreaded by you than the name and splendour of a bishopric. This is not putting out the fire, but hiding it, and in such a manner as actually to favour its progress. For, while you leave all this working machinery behind, you put it in a condition to produce the greatest possible effect. You give to Romanism the prestige and influence of a persecuted sect. Of these thirteen bishops you make so many martyrs; and you cannot be surprised if their adherents venerate them accordingly. Prohibit episcopacy, if you will; but remember that, in that case, you are fighting only with a shadow, and banishing nothing but a name.

It may then be said by Anglican churchmen, This will not satisfy us. We must have no further intrusion of popery. To this I reply, Very well: in this I agree with you. But this leads me to the second general view which I proposed to take, and to which I will now proceed.

II. I observed at the commencement that I should regard the erection of a Romish hierarchy in England in the first instance by itself; and in the second as a part of the more extended aggressive apparatus with which it is connected.



We are all aware that there is much more doing for the advancement of Popery in this country than the mere constitution of a Romish episcopate. The efforts meet us on every hand ; whether in the multiplication of chapels and religious houses, in the obtrusion into our thoroughfares of ecclesiastical processions, or in the assiduities of scholastic and domestic instruction. All this is highly important, and requires to be viewed very seriously ; but not more seriously than wisely. The remarks which I offer on this part of the subject are the following :

1. I hold the spread of Romanism in this country to be deeply deplorable. Without saying that it is impossible for a Romanist to be a true Christian, and without denying that some Romanists are such, I speak of Romanism in terms of unqualified detestation. And, further, without saying that there is not in other ecclesiastical systems, especially as allied with secular government, a large amount of similar evils, I maintain Romanism to be the most corrupt and pernicious of all ecclesiastical systems. In my judgment, it is hostile to the happiness of private, domestic, and social life, and to the general welfare of the community. It is politically noxious, and a foe to civil and religious liberty ; at once ambitious, despotic, and cruel. In religion, it is among the grossest of all superstitions and idolatries ; playing with the imagination in order to stupefy the conscience, and deceive the heart. Not paganism is more corrupt, nor Mahometanism more intolerant ; while no system ever known on earth has clothed its schemes of avarice, or its deeds of blood, with such plausible and audacious pretences of piety and charity. Among the calamities that may be conceived of as happening to our country, I know of none so great as would be constituted by the prevalence of popery. In England's Protestantism—not, however, confining that term to the Anglican church, for all bodies of Nonconformists, the Romanists only excepted, are Protestants too—in England's Protestantism is England's happiness, and England's hope.

2. But, however deeply the spread of Romanism may be to be deplored, the religious activity of Romanists cannot be coerced. It is more than a hundred and fifty years ago that the principle of religious freedom was declared to be the law of England, by the passing of that great measure known as the Toleration Act, one of the first fruits of the glorious

revolution of 1688. Under that act every man has, in England, the right of freely exercising his religion, without hindrance or molestation. Here may worship after his fashion the Presbyterian, the Quaker, the Brownist, the Baptist, the Swedenborgian, and the Mormonite; ay, the Mussulman, the Chinese, the Buddhist, and the Hindoo. Then surely, also, the Romanist. There can be no exception made in his case, without throwing overboard the very principle on which the whole enactment rests; namely, that religion is an affair between man and his Maker, and that earthly governments have nothing to do with it.

Besides, what is the meaning of any special squeamishness in relation to Romanism? We, who could endure a Turkish mosque, a Buddhist temple, or the hut of an African fetish, what is the reason that we are provoked beyond bearing at the service of a Romish cathedral? Its idolatry and error? Impossible: for then we should hate all alike. It is the mere spirit of religious animosity and hatred, which is proverbially the keenest and most implacable towards our nearest neighbour, and closest competitor.

It is an accident attaching to the Romish church that it has an episcopal platform, an accident, however, to which the episcopacy of the Church of England itself is owing. Yet it is but an accidental characteristic. This, however, is the gist of the whole matter. If Romanism in England had not unfolded itself into a hierarchy, its progress might have gone on quietly enough. Why, it might have happened that the Anglican clergy should have had to contend with twenty hierarchies, instead of one. As things have turned out, other religious sects have not been so enlightened as to discern the scriptural and apostolical character of prelacy; but it is conceivable that they might have shared in the benefit of this illumination, and then every sect would have had its bishops and archbishops, and poor England would have been carved out into dioceses by so many ecclesiastical knives that perhaps not a parish would have remained entire. In what a deplorable condition would the Anglican bishops have been then! Certainly, there is something in the Providence which has guarded them from such an overwhelming competition, which might calm them under the appearance of an isolated rival.

It is said, indeed, by some persons, that a ground exists

for making Romanism an exception to the great law of toleration, in its being not more an ecclesiastical than a political system, and a political system in pointed hostility to the British constitution. I am not ignorant of the part which the Roman pontiffs have played on the theatre of Europe, and in this realm of England, nor do I pretend to ignore the zeal and delight with which their successors would re-enact the game, whether of comedy, or of tragedy: but I feel no force in the argument thus advanced in support of religious intolerance; and for this simple reason, that it covers too much ground. "Do not tolerate Romanism as a religion, for it is political also." To this I reply, So are many other religions, the Mahometan, for example; and, if you refuse to tolerate all such, religious liberty no longer exists. "Do not tolerate Romanism as a religion, for it is politically hostile to the British constitution." To this I reply, See what you ask. You must then repeal, not only the Emancipation Act, which was brought forward by the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel as the only alternative of civil war; but you must repeal the Toleration Act, which has been the basis and guarantee of religious peace and general prosperity to England for a hundred and fifty years. He would be a powerful statesman who could do this, and a bold one who would propose it. Free and happy England would never permit this re-imposition of her chains. Nor can it be necessary. Noxious political tendencies can be controlled without religious intolerance, or not at all.

Indeed, the Romish church and all other churches are, as to this matter, in the same boat. The principle which brings freedom to them is the same which brings freedom to ourselves. The chains which are forged for Romanists to-day may be forced on Dissenters to-morrow. If Nonconformists do not hold fast the principle of religious liberty in its fullest extent, they, or their children, will be likely to rue the day when they abandon it. If we should unhappily lend ourselves to legislation against the religious liberties of Romanists, we should deserve in the next session of Parliament to lose our own.

3. As to the results of the activity now displayed for the advancement of Romanism, I pretend not to prophesy. Questions are anxiously asked in many quarters on this point. Will popery again have the ascendancy in England?

And will times of persecution return? To all such questions I have only to answer, I cannot tell. God has his own purposes to fulfil, and he will accomplish them. So far as the Church of England is concerned, however, I have no hesitation in saying that, if such a calamity should, in the mystery of the divine ways, overtake her, she richly deserves it. While joyfully acknowledging the truth which is in her formularies, and the piety which is among her members, looking at her historically, and as a church, I see that her basis (for such the doctrine of baptismal regeneration is declared to be) is superstition, that her treasures are to this day replenished by plunder, and that her hands are red with the unexpiated blood of our fathers. But may God spare us! If there be those for whose sake our country may be withheld from the desolating judgments which are to overtake the Man of Sin in all his dwelling-places, they consist of the great body of evangelical Christians of every name within her borders.

4. A much more important question relates to our present duty, and the attitude which it behoves us to take in circumstances, undoubtedly, of grave importance. No question, we all of us ought to be active. No man ought to be asleep. But so we ought to have been before, and the circumstances of the moment do but enforce an old obligation. And our activity now ought to be directed, not so much to the repulse of Romanism, as to the removal of ignorance, superstition, and vice, universally. It is comparatively of little moment, if people be left in ignorance and sin, whether they perish amidst Romish or Anglican formalities.

With respect, however, to the present aggressive aspect of Romanism, it must be admitted that the great bulk of our population are in a condition eminently accessible to Romish emissaries. Large masses of them are totally ignorant, even of the simplest elements of Christianity; and, generally speaking, the people have been trained by the parochial clergy in just such a manner as a Romish instructor would desire. "Take me," says the Anglican clergyman to his parishioners, "as the priest of God to you. I am your authorized minister. Believe what I tell you, do what I bid you, and be satisfied that all will be well. Especially believe in the efficacy of the sacraments, and the sacredness of the Prayer-book." Thus have the people been trained, not to

Christianity, but to what Dr. Cumming, in his sermon before the Queen, has not infelicitously called Churchianity; to faith in the ritual, and faith in the priest.

Now it is not difficult to see that this method of parochial teaching has originated in the presence and activity of Dissenters of various classes, against whose growing influence the clergy have sought to defend themselves by thus setting up an exclusive ecclesiastical claim. But the presence and activity of Romanists quite alter the case. That which was a defence as against a Dissenter is no defence as against a Romanist. "Do not hearken to *him*!" says the clergyman; "he is not a church minister. Keep to your church, and listen to your priest." And so the contemned Dissenter departs. But now comes the Jesuit. "I am of the church," says he, "the true church, and I am a priest; you may listen to *me*." And now commences a controversy, church against church, the Papal church against the Protestant church, the church of Rome against the Church of England; and in this controversy the Romanist has certainly the best story to tell. "When did your church begin?" says he. "At the Reformation." "O!" he replies, "mine is much older than that. And what is your church founded upon?" "Acts of Parliament." "Ay," he rejoins, "mine is founded on the apostles. And who is the head of your church?" "The Queen!" "Indeed," says he; "mine has a spiritual head, St. Peter and his successors. But what can your priest do for you?" "He can regenerate me in baptism, prepare me for confirmation, and give me the sacrament." "I can do all that for you," continues the Jesuit, "and much more. I can offer the sacrifice of the mass, and give you the real body and blood of Jesus Christ." Now, I ask, what is the state of mind upon which such appeals as these are adapted to make the easiest and the deepest impression? Is it not precisely that in which prevails faith in the ritual, and faith in the priest? This is just the soil in which the seed scattered by the Romanist is most likely to germinate; and thus the Anglican parochial priest has been preparing the ground for the Romish emissary.

That I am not speaking without book when I say that, in the controversy *church against church*, the Romanist has the best of the argument, may appear from the fact, that not a few persons of large information and cultivated powers have,



of late years, transferred themselves from the Anglican to the Papal communion. Dr. Newman and many more, whatever they are, are no fools, and the mystery of their conversion is probably to be resolved into the exclusively ecclesiastical view which they have taken of the questions at issue.

And while the Romanist, as thus pitted against the Anglican, will find himself to have the best of the argument, the Anglican will find him, in practical conflict, to wield the heaviest weapons. Parish clergymen have been accustomed, in many instances, to lead a life of ease and self-indulgence; Romish emissaries will set an example of self-denial and assiduity. Parish clergymen are, in many instances, very ill qualified for the religious, and especially the controversial, instruction of the people; Romish emissaries will show themselves to be highly educated men, and skilful dialecticians. Parish clergymen have, in many cases, habituated their flocks to take bribes; Romish emissaries will outbid them. The Anglican church appeals to the imagination by a ritual in some degree showy and imposing; the Romish church will eclipse its glory by more pompous and magnificent ceremonies.

No, my brethren. English churchianity can make no head against Romish churchianity. They are but two species of one and the same thing, and the weaker cannot resist the stronger. The proper opposing power here is not the church, but the BIBLE.

One immediate effect of a reference to the Bible is to get us out of the sphere of priestly authority, by bringing us into contact with "the Word of God," the supreme and exclusive authority to which all priests must bow, and by which all priests must be tried.

Another immediate effect of a reference to the Bible is that it entirely alters the nature and ground of the controversy. There is no longer a question of churchianity, but of Christianity. We are in presence of the cardinal truth, that "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision"—neither Anglicanism nor Romanism—"but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. v. 6): that is to say, nothing but personal religion, independently of all churches, and all church relations. With the *Bible alone* before us, the parties whom we address are no longer perplexed by antagonistic persuasions—"Belong to this church,"

or, "Adhere to that;" the pleadings all go in a different, in a common, direction—"Be ye reconciled to God." There is no longer an interested aspect in our appeal, as while one is endeavouring to gain a proselyte and another afraid of losing one; our entreaty becomes undeniably generous and influential—"We care not whom you follow, so as you will save your own soul." There is no longer an assumption, or an appearance of assumption, of authority by man over his fellow; the voice of man is hushed, and the teacher professes nothing but to commend to his hearers the word of God—"Judge ye what I say." By this word the understanding is enlightened, the conscience is probed, the passions are roused, and the whole soul at once subdued and cleansed, sanctified and gladdened. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether" (Psalm xix. 7-9).

In the use of this weapon, then, lies our strength. It is that which God has appointed for his work, nor have we need to fear its power. It has always been the dread and terror of Rome. It was by gradually withdrawing it from general use that she succeeded in palming upon Christendom her blasphemous assumptions; it was by the reproduction of it to the world that the Reformers struck so heavy a blow at her dominion; it was by the free use of it in their ministrations that the Puritan divines caused evangelical religion to root itself in England; and it is at this moment by the wide circulation of it throughout the land that the maintenance and diffusion of piety are most effectually promoted. Be this, therefore, our armour; "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

It was with a view to this part of our subject that I selected the passages of Scripture which I read at the commencement of the discourse. They are a portion of the word of the Lord in relation to the false prophets of Jeremiah's day. "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my counsel, and caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil

way, and from the evil of their doings. . . . The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord."

The distinction which is here drawn between the dreams of the unsent prophets and the word of the Lord, may be applied without any injustice to the matter before us. Assuredly, they who have nothing to say to us but about churches, Anglican or Roman, have nothing better than a dream to tell; nor can they justly affirm that the Lord hath sent them to tell it. Yet how busily are they telling it to kindred dreamers! And how gaily the dreamy dance of formalism goes on, till its gorgeous pageantry is lost in the shadows of endless night! But "what is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord." There are those whom he has put in possession of "HIS WORD;" and it is for them to speak his word faithfully. If we stand in his counsel, and make the people hear his words, then, under his blessing, shall we turn them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.

Upon this subject I would fain say a word, in the sincerest kindness, to the clergy of the Church of England. To those, at least (and they are not a few), who have known and felt for themselves the power of the Word of God to enlighten the eyes and convert the soul, I would say, Come, brethren, over the Bible let us shake hands. We are now in a common peril, and we may take common action for our safety. I cannot reconcile myself to your ecclesiastical platform, nor you yourselves to mine; but there is something far more precious to us both than either of them, it is the Gospel of Christ, and the salvation of men. Let us earnestly disseminate scriptural knowledge. I say from my heart, if the diffusion of the Bible overthrows the Baptist denomination, let it be overthrown; and, if you can say the same from your heart respecting the Anglican church, then we can work together, and God will be with us because we are with him. If, however, it be otherwise, and if the Anglican clergy, even the most evangelical among them, will meet Romish aggression only by the assertion of the purity and excellence of their church, and by the reiteration of assumptions on its behalf as baseless as any put forward on behalf of the papacy, then, indeed, shall I regard the Church of England as doomed, and the hour of her destiny as not far removed.

For ourselves, beloved brethren, let us work for God and for man while life and opportunity last. We know that there is a vast and glorious plan which God is working out, and of which we and our times are but a small constituent part. It comprehends many ages past, and many ages to come. It comprehends many agencies, and many events; and among these the development of Romanism, and its destruction. It may be that the Man of Sin is about to re-assume what was once a part of himself, and has ever been near of kin to him, in order that he may be prepared for the fearful judgments which most surely await him. Be it so. Even so let all thine enemies perish, O Lord: true and righteous are thy judgments. "Fallen, fallen, is Babylon," shall be a cry, not of defeat, but of victory; not of sorrow, but of gladness. Yet let the voice be heard of heavenly warning, which saith, "Come out of her, my people, lest ye be partakers of her plagues."

Finally, my brethren, let us not allow ourselves to be carried away by the irruption of ecclesiastical frenzy which has suddenly burst upon us. In our patience let us possess our souls. A time of excitement like the present should lead us to fall back on our principles, and to adhere to them with steadfastness. "The Lord reigneth:" and under the shadow of his wings shall we find our refuge, until calamities be overpast.

## THE ULTIMATE GROUND OF MISSIONARY OPERATIONS.\*

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I **NEED** not say anything here of the high importance of missionary operations, or the deep interest attaching to them; of the strenuous labours by which they are carried out, or the constant and cheerful liberality by which they should be supported. Nor is it my intention to say anything here of the vast developments towards which missionary operations are tending, or of the growing triumphs to which they are destined. I propose to carry your thoughts not so much forwards as backwards, to examine not so much the progress of the edifice as its foundations, and to lay open not so much the work to be done as the principles by which it should be sustained.

There is much importance in an investigation of this kind. All labour requires to be sustained by congruous and proportionate impulses. The prospect of gain animates commercial enterprise, and the hope of power the vigils of ambition. Without an adequate aim, clearly discerned and duly appreciated, exertion may, indeed, be violent; but it will be also fitful and transient, commenced under the influence of excited feeling rather than of sound judgment, and liable to terminate in disappointment, if not in disgust. Lamentable as such an issue is in the ordinary concerns of life, it is most of all to be regretted in operations which relate to the spread of religion, and the affairs of the kingdom of Christ. In no case is it more important than in these—in none is it so important—to understand well why we put ourselves into action, and what results we desire to produce.

For an investigation of this kind there is also occasion.

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\* A Lecture delivered at the Baptist Library, Moorgate Street, London, October 20th, 1852, at a meeting of the Young Men's Association in aid of the Baptist Missionary Society.



Although of remoter origin, during the last sixty years the missionary enterprise has been entered into by a large number of persons, and by many with great ardour. Treasure, talent, life, have been consecrated to it in large amounts; and still its ever-enlarging field presents new claims. I am far from saying that the temper of the Christian world will not be found in full harmony with these constantly-enlarging calls; but I think I shall not be alone, if I confess that, in my breast, anxiety mingles with hope. I am not without suspicions that the mainspring of the machine is approaching the limit of its elasticity, and that the missionary spirit, such as it is and has been, has done nearly all it can do. I am not quite sure that some are not asking what has been done, and what is likely to be done, in a tone that expresses little satisfaction in the past, and gives little promise for the future. It is for this reason that I think it not unreasonable to invite you to inquire, Why have we been in motion? What have we intended, or wished to accomplish?

The title of my Lecture speaks of the *ultimate* ground of missionary operations. This form of expression, of course, implies that among the grounds on which missionary toils have been undertaken some are more proximate, lie more upon the surface, and sooner meet the eye. Let us look for a moment at these.

The first which presents itself, perhaps, is the wretched condition of the pagan world. For a considerable period our country was amused, and even its more earnest Christians were beguiled, by representations of the simplicity and innocence of the heathen nations; representations which, when men of a different stamp put them to the test, were found to be mere reflections of the practical heathenism of the travellers that made them. Deeply affecting, and but too just, descriptions of the nations, whether civilized or savage, were ultimately sent home, and we were made aware that the most painful exhibitions in the sacred volume constituted a true portraiture of man in every age, and in every clime. Then the churches began to pity them. Their deep ignorance and pollution presented themselves to our view, as inevitable and too copious sources of both present and future woe; and, having a knowledge of him who came "to seek and save that which was lost," our pity began to impel us to

exertion. Then we heard of our warrant and commission to "preach the Gospel to every creature," and of the universal triumph to which the Gospel was destined. Then the trumpet-sound burst from the rural solitudes of England upon our startled ears, "Expect great things; attempt great things." We went forth—not forgetting that our action was but instrumental—to SAVE. We aimed at the conversion of the world.

Do I mean to complain of this? Was it unchristian to feel compassion for souls? Or is the Gospel not adapted to convert, and designed to save? I am quite prepared for these questions; and I give in reply a frank assurance that I utter no complaint. All was doubtless right as far as it went. I only raise a question whether the impulse went far enough; and I propose to make my way to an answer to this question by propounding one or two observations.

The object before us having been the conversion and salvation of men, I propose, in the first place, to inquire what proportion the result attained may be conceived to bear to the labours undertaken.

I am well aware that such a question does not admit of a categorical answer. The influences of the preached Gospel, and even of the distributed Bible, are far too extended, and too much concealed from the human eye, to permit the souls saved by such instrumentality to be numbered on earth; and I rejoice to avow my conviction that much more has been done in this way by missionary exertion than now is, or in this world ever will be, known. Having made this acknowledgment, however, let me return to my purpose, and avail myself of such materials as are presented to my hand.

The fruits of evangelical missions of every country, and of every name, in heathen lands, during the last sixty years, may be roughly computed at 100,000 souls; persons not made nominal Christians, but truly converted to God.

Do I think this result small? Especially when I am reminded that the value of one soul exceeds that of a thousand worlds? Undoubtedly, I do not think this result small; or permit myself to forget how far the salvation of a single soul outweighs the expense and labour of the whole missionary enterprise. God forbid that I should fail to sympathize, as far as sinful mortal may, in the unutterable joy which prevails "in the presence of the angels of God

over one sinner that repenteth"! But this, although a part, is only a part, of the subject before us. The result of missionary labour, if not small in itself, may yet be small comparatively; and, indeed, it is so, when set by the side of some things with which it may not unfairly be put in comparison.

The result of missionary labour is small in comparison with the portion of the human race contemplated by it. This comprehends generally the pagan nations, which have been computed to contain eight hundred millions of mankind, out of the thousand millions of which the human race is supposed to consist. To by far the larger portion of these the Gospel has not even been preached. The foot of the Christian missionary has never trod the regions where they dwell, the sound of his voice has never struck upon their ears. The fact which I am now stating is one of the standing arguments employed by the advocates of missionary exertion. "Help, for the multitude of peoples yet unevangelized!" And, in order that the eye may assist the appeal thus made by the ear, a map is often exhibited, showing in lively colours over what broad spaces none have yet travelled to proclaim the good tidings. Certainly the saved are few to the lost.

The result of missionary labour is small in comparison with the total population of the regions evangelized. I am not careful about the estimate which may be formed of these as to their extent. I cast my eye over the regions throughout which the Gospel has been more or less extensively and effectively preached, and I will leave it to any one to choose for himself what portions of them he will regard as evangelized, and what portions he will still consider as pagan; but again I say that the saved are few, and the lost are many. For even in these regions the majority of the population have not heard the Gospel. Many have heard it, doubtless, and so many that, when the probable sum of them is named, it will appear a very large number; but this number will be found to fall very far short of the entire population. Gospel hearers may be reckoned by hundreds of thousands, but the population is to be reckoned by hundreds of millions. Missionaries gather what may be called, under the circumstances, good congregations; but in a region, in a town, at a festival, in a village, those who do not assemble are for the most part far, far more numerous than those who do. In evangelized regions, then, the saved are few to the lost.

The result of missionary operations is small in comparison with the numbers to whom the Gospel is actually preached. Here, again, precision is not to be expected, nor shall I attempt even an approach to it. The general fact is sufficiently obvious from the common, and all but invariable, tenor of missionary narratives. In every congregation that we hear of in pagan lands, apart from those instances in which churches have been formed and regular worship established, the large majority are either trifling, or hostile; the preacher is plied with questions either curious, or captious; and it is recorded with much pleasure that one or two seemed to be seriously impressed, or remained for further inquiry. It is, I suppose, beyond the truth, if I conjecture that one in fifty of the heathen who have heard the Gospel have embraced it; even among the multitude of Gospel hearers, therefore, the saved are few to the lost.

Now as, on the one hand, I may not underrate the salvation of a soul, so, on the other hand, no man should underrate the loss of a soul. "Thousands have been saved," say some, "rejoice with us." We do so; but we rejoin, "Millions have perished: mingle your joy with lamentation."

But further, the results of missionary labours are small in comparison with those labours themselves. Confining our view to the last sixty years, the sum of the various elements which have been embarked in the missionary enterprise is far indeed from insignificant. The pecuniary expenditure must be reckoned by millions sterling. In December, 1846, it was stated in the "Missionary Register," that the amount contributed to various evangelical missionary societies throughout the world was no less than £608,000, or considerably more than half a million sterling in that single year. But this is the smallest in real value of all the items. The men are far more precious than the money. From the "Year Book of Missions," published by Mr. Hoole in 1847, it appears that the number of missionaries at that period employed in various parts of the world amounted to eighteen hundred—a number which, large as it is, can scarcely be less than doubled by the catechists and native assistants reported, but not named, and consequently not reckoned. These men of God had gone forth over the face of the whole earth, and were at that period, as appears from the same work, distributed to one thousand and four hundred stations of toil.

None of these numbers have diminished since 1847; on the contrary, they have for the most part experienced an augmentation, and they had been nearly what they were in 1847 for many years before. The amount of cost, exertion, and sacrifice, thus in a few words expressed, it is difficult—it is impossible—distinctly to conceive. To lay no stress upon the money expended, the piety, talent, and devoted hearts consecrated to these labours, and the interests and affections sacrificed to them, are altogether countless and priceless. Could we truly represent the toils which these three thousand six hundred labourers have undergone, the perils they have encountered, the number of places at which, and the number of persons to whom, they have communicated the Gospel of Christ, either by preaching or by distribution of the Scriptures, together with the various ramifications of the tidings they have spread and the influences they have exerted, the sum would, doubtless, be found to exceed not only calculation but imagination. And this process commenced more than half a century ago, and, advancing continuously to its present magnitude, has resulted in the conversion of (we suppose) 100,000 souls. That this number in itself is large I have already admitted; but I am now looking at it in comparison with the means employed, and in this view I cannot make the same admission. As Christ is God's salvation to the ends of the earth, so is the Gospel of Christ the divinely-appointed instrument for bringing the nations to the knowledge and love of it. It is the sword by which he conquers, and the sceptre by which he rules. In the measure of success with which he has crowned the use of this instrumentality we own his divine goodness, and for it we give him praise; but in the means themselves there was an adaptation to produce a much larger result. That blessed Gospel which has converted some who heard it might have converted all, for it is God's appointed instrument for this end; and its efficacy in one case demonstrates its sufficiency for the rest. The Gospel, however, has not converted all who in pagan lands have heard it, and that not by a very large number. Many, many, more have perished under it than have been saved by it. Considering the instrumentality which has been in use, together with the manner in which, the time during which, and the extent throughout which, it has been employed, this is a consideration which,



while regarding the salvation of men as our great object, cannot be without its saddening influence. We have gone out to save men, and men are not saved. We have met a prevailing pest with what professes to be a sovereign remedy, and by far the greater number of the patients are none the better for its administration.

Having thus contemplated the result of missionary labour in relation to those who are saved by it, let us further contemplate it in relation to those who are not saved by it. I speak now, of course, of those who may be said in one way or another to have heard the Gospel, either directly or indirectly, either by word of mouth, or by perusal of the Scriptures or scriptural tracts. They are not converted by it, and consequently are not saved. It is not enough, however, to give a full description of their condition to say that they are not saved. Their condition is made worse. Their means of knowledge have been increased, and in many cases their actual knowledge has been increased also. Now, the means of knowledge are the measure of responsibility, and every increase of the one is an augmentation of the other. It was this which made the situation of the Jews in the time of our Lord so serious, and even awful. "Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin ! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida ! For, if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for, if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee" (Matt. xi. 20-24).

There is nothing in the change of circumstances to affect the principle on which this passage proceeds. The means of knowledge are divine gifts, to be improved and accounted for; and of them to whom much is given much will fitly be required. The preaching of the Gospel to the heathen throws at once a light from heaven into the midst of their antecedent darkness; it makes the most forcible appeals to the

conscience and to the heart; and, if the hearer gives no heed, and yields no obedience, his course of worldliness and sin becomes more culpable than it was before. He was not without blame when gross and vain superstitions at once deluded and degraded him; but he is much more criminal now, when "the true light shineth" upon him, and he will not walk therein. It will henceforward be better for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for him; nay, better than for him will it be for those of his fellow-pagans to whom the great salvation has never been proclaimed.

I am far from saying, or from wishing to insinuate, that the injury thus incidentally resulting to unbelieving heathen can supply any reason why the Gospel should not be preached to the heathen at large, or that it is for a moment to be put into comparison with the unspeakable blessing conferred upon those to whom the Gospel is made the power of God unto salvation. Let those who will believe the glad tidings be saved, whosoever by the rejection of them may perish! Yet the thought has surely in it a measure of sadness, and may well serve as a drawback of some amount to our joy. Our object has been one of pure benevolence. Our hearts melted with pity. We beheld the condition of the lost, and, having the means of salvation in our hands, we went forth to save them. Some, thank God! and, these not a few, have been saved by our instrumentality, and we rejoice over them; but some, alas! and these also not a few, have refused our friendly call, and sink in our very sight into a perdition aggravated by our interference. If it had not been for us, they would never have heard the Gospel which they refuse: if it had not been for us, those wonderful appeals would never have been made to them, the resistance of which now constitutes their chief guilt, and creates for them a more fearful doom than could otherwise have awaited them. Is not this melancholy? We would have done them good, but in effect we have done them harm. It is thus in spirit their best friends who may be regarded as having kindled for them a funeral pile of awfulness and terror otherwise unknown.

Considerations of this class go far towards convincing me, that, regarding the missionary work as a work of pure benevolence, its result is not satisfactory. I do not say that they make me feel inclined to relinquish it; but I may confess that they mingle with it an element of awe and sadness

from which I would fain escape. They tend to make us dissatisfied with that view of the missionary work to which they attach themselves, and urge us to cast about, and to inquire whether there be any other ground on which its claims can more satisfactorily rest.

No longer viewing it, then, as a mere enterprise of pity, it may be better, perhaps, to regard the call to missionary labour as the call of duty; a call which it is for us to obey irrespectively of consequences.

There can be no doubt that there is at least a measure of justice in this view. Beyond question, the call to missionary labour is the call of duty. To us the very highest authority proclaims it: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." Here no question of consequences is permitted to us. Whether men will hear or whether they will forbear, the message is to be conveyed to them, and we should be bound to persevere in the process, even if not a single sinner were saved from the wrath to come. All this is, doubtless, true and unquestionable; and yet to my mind even this is not wholly satisfactory.

It is too *hard* to be satisfactory. God has made us with hearts as well as consciences, and it is not his wont to divide the one so entirely from the other. He has been accustomed to call into play the feelings he has given us, and it is not like him to allow us to find the right and the pleasant thus absolutely severed. It makes the performance of duty more agreeable, if some other reason can be assigned for it besides the naked one of a mere absolute command. The command to preach the Gospel to every creature being given, indeed, we obey, and leave the result to him who has a right to our services, and we will endeavour neither to rejoice over those whom we save, nor to weep over those whom we destroy; but this hardening of the heart can never be either pleasant to us, or in keeping with the character of the Master we serve.

It may be further observed, however, that this sentiment of absolute duty is not that which was cherished and displayed by the first preachers of the Gospel in the pagan world. I take Paul for my example, and I quote from his second epistle to the Corinthians the following language: "Now, thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his

knowledge by us in every place; for we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish—to the one we are the savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life” (2 Cor. ii. 14–16). Without going into a minute criticism of this passage, this is manifest upon the face of it, that the apostle rejoiced in the *whole* result of his ministry, alike in them that were saved and in them that perished; and that he considered himself as achieving a triumph by Christ equally over them that believed and them that believed not. It may be for us hereafter to inquire how this could be, and what cause for rejoicing he could find over those to whom his word was the savour of death unto death; all that I have at present to do with is the fact that he did rejoice, and that the sentiment with which he fulfilled his course was not that of mere duty, of which we have been speaking.

It may be laid down as a principle, then, that there is some ground or other on which the *whole* result of the Gospel ministry may be rejoiced in by a Christian heart, and be regarded, indeed, as a glorious triumph for which God is to be magnified.

In searching after this ground, we shall begin in the easiest and gentlest manner if we take, in the first place, a negative position. It is clear that it cannot be identified with the interest of man. To be the savour of life unto life, indeed, may be pleasant; but to be the savour of death unto death must in all cases be a source of pungent regret. This, at least, so far as the individual is concerned. If there be any ground on which the latter effect of a preached Gospel can be a source of gratification, it must be by the force of considerations drawn from another quarter, and of weight sufficient to counterbalance this obvious source of regret.

We have, then, nothing to do but to turn our eyes towards God himself, and to inquire if there be anything in relation to his ways and his glory by which the sentiment of gladness may, under the circumstances supposed, be justified. Now, we know that God’s dispensations towards man, although benevolent, are not exclusively benevolent. He has instituted, and conducts, a moral government, involving rewards and punishments; and of this moral government his Gospel itself is, in one of its aspects, a dispensation. As contemplating the whole of the human race, it is a system, not of

actual redemption, but of probationary mercy. It is glad tidings for all, "a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," even the chief of them; but glad tidings proclaimed to men for their acceptance or refusal, as it pleases them. "He that heareth let him hear, and he that forbeareth let him forbear." "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned."

Now, from an attentive observation of God's ways, it clearly appears that he finds great excellency in a well-adapted probationary system, and views all its issues with a solemn complacency. Although it is not the only principle on which he proceeds (his benefits, on the contrary, being often distributed with a sovereign hand), yet he adopts it often enough to show that he finds a divine satisfaction in it. Thus he treated Adam as the father of our race, when he subjected him to the great experiment in Eden. Thus he treats the whole race of man, whom he governs by the precepts and sanctions of the moral law. And thus he deals with mankind in the dispensation of his mercy. This testing of moral character, or experimental proving of intelligent agents, affords him a scope of action peculiarly his own, and fitted to yield him a revenue of honour which he values. He does not shrink from the process because some of its issues may be—will be—painful; the object being wisely selected, and the terms being equitably arranged, he is certainly glorified, whatever may be the conduct, and, consequently, whatever may be the doom, of those who are subjected to it.

It is characteristic of the Christian to have sympathy with God. The glory of God, which he makes his own first object, becomes also the first object of all his friends; an object which, in its incomparable greatness, rises superior to all others, and in which all others, however interesting in themselves, are practically merged. Thus, as God has been pleased to select a system of moral probation as that by which he will glorify himself in his dealings with mankind, in the progress and advancement of this system the Christian rejoices. Gladly would he have co-operated in a plan which should have had for its object the actual salvation of all men, more gladly, indeed, in one view, than in any other, as yielding an ampler gratification to his benevolence; but, since God has not been pleased to set any such plan on foot,



he has in this respect no option. What God is doing is the working out of a plan of moral probation, by bringing to bear upon man's heart and conscience the full power of motive supplied by the intervention of his mercy in his beloved Son, and awaiting the result, let men treat it as they may. It is a noble and a solemn thing to see how man's heart will act under this unparalleled weight of motive, and to behold the character thus fully brought out pass onward to the great tribunal where a just retribution awaits all its developments. As friends of God we concur with him in this great movement, and, with warm feelings for his honour, yield ourselves gladly to the advancement of it.

In this respect—that is, as an instrument of moral probation—the Gospel has a sure and universal success. It does actually *try* every heart to which it is propounded. It is an appeal which men must either obey or resist. Its presentation causes, whether men will or not, a manifestation of the secrets of the soul, either, on the one hand, by the exhibition of penitence and submission, or, on the other, by the development of enmity and rebellion previously unknown. After this there is no more to be done. Man's heart has been tried to the utmost. No motives of greater power can possibly be presented to it; nothing more just, nothing more terrible, nothing more touching. Man is then ready for judgment. He has heard all that God has to say, and has given his answer; henceforth let God be glorified in the award of the Judge. The preaching of the Gospel is thus effectual both in them that believe and in them that perish, and whether its ministers be a savour of life unto life or of death unto death. Its progress through a corrupt and darkened world constitutes a continuous victory, and its disseminators are warranted to say, with the apostle, “Now thanks be to God, who *always* causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.” Even in unbelief, with its multifarious aspects, the influence of the knowledge of Christ appears, since there could have been no such manifestation of character but under the appeal of Gospel truth; and, however the sinner may hurt himself by the rejection of it, God, who meant to bring out his heart by it, has in his purpose fully succeeded.

It is for this full probation of mankind that the world has

been waiting. In the pagan world man's heart has long been left, like fallow ground, unproductive. It is capable of far deeper emotions, and of far more vigorous action, than it ever experiences until the truths of the Gospel are presented to it. Until then conscience slumbers, or is beguiled by accidental and conventional influences; until then the passions have never beheld the great objects by which they are destined to be aroused, and hope and fear, joy and sorrow, love and hate, such as man was made for, have never been enkindled within his breast. The times antecedent to the coming of Christ were, in the apostle's words, "times of ignorance," which "God winked at;" "but now he commandeth all men everywhere to repent," and the newly-unfolded motives are ready to enforce the command. To all nations, therefore, let the command be carried, and the motives be displayed. The world cannot come to an end till this is done. The human race must not expire until its magnificent capabilities have been fully tested and disclosed.

It is now for the Christian to say whether he can find in the object thus set before him a satisfactory impulse to missionary labour. Relinquishing the conversion of all men, a result which at present he is not permitted to attain, and which it scarcely appears that the Scripture warrants him ever to anticipate, and seeking more than a sense of mere obligation, can he find a worthy aim in carrying out among mankind a system of moral probation? Is its end so wise, and are its terms so equitable, that the glory of God as promoted by it is deserving of his consecration? I will not suppose an answer to these questions in the negative.

Let us now briefly retrace our steps in this discussion. We set out with inquiring after the ultimate ground of missionary operations. The most proximate one is benevolence, but benevolence does not derive a gratification sufficiently ample to render this satisfactory; the second is duty, but neither is this satisfactory, it is too cold and unscriptural; the third is sympathy with God in a grand scheme of moral probation. And here, if I mistake not, the heart can rest. We would preach the Gospel to every creature, not so much expecting that every one shall attain salvation, for that will not be; not merely to acquit ourselves of an obligation, for every duty needs its animating motives; but that every man may be made acquainted with the glorious truths to which

God has made man's heart to respond, and for his response to which time, judgment, and eternity, are waiting.

This, to me, is the ultimate ground of missionary operations. And, if it be so to you also, you will readily concur with me in two practical suggestions with which I shall conclude this address.

In the first place, we may learn how to form our estimate of missionary success. It has been customary, and not unnatural, to estimate success by conversions, or by hopeful appearances of conversion; I would estimate it rather by the number of persons to whom the Gospel has been preached, or of those, at least, to whom its grand persuasives have been brought home. Wherever the moral powers have been set in action, wherever the conscience and the heart have been aroused, there the Gospel has produced its effect. After this, a man must be either a believer or an unbeliever, he must either reject the Saviour or receive him; and, although I shall be more happy if he accept the great salvation, and become with me a fellow-heir of eternal life, yet, if he do not, still I am happy. I have been instrumental in bringing him, as a rational creature of God, under the last and highest influences of his moral government; and, although I be to the individual "a savour of death unto death," I shall be "unto God"—which is of far greater moment—"a sweet savour of Christ."

And while we thus learn how to estimate missionary success, we may learn also how to conduct missionary labour. This is, of necessity, directed in the first instance to the awakening of sinners; but it has, perhaps, been too exclusively directed afterwards to the care of the converted—that is, to the formation and pastoral oversight of churches. Of this, as an object regarded by itself, I would not for a moment be understood to speak slightly. Nothing can be more interesting, or more important. I only raise a question whether it is truly missionary, or exactly in the spirit of the missionary enterprise. The precise aim of that, as I understand it, is to "preach the Gospel to every creature;" those who are converted by it providing for the care of one another, by elements sure to be supplied among themselves. So it was, if I read the New Testament correctly, with the first missionaries; and so, if I confess my secret but solemn thoughts, it ought in my judgment to be

among their successors now. A missionary of the cross, in my conception of him, should be a winged messenger proclaiming the glad tidings as he flies; and if, here and there, the guilty and the wretched who have heard his proclamation and welcomed it, should lay hold upon him, and say, "Stay with us," I cannot but think that he should commit this work of edification to other hands, and reply, "Hinder me not, for the tidings I am charged with belong to nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues, who pine for my coming, and perish while I delay."

In one word, I think that missionary operations should be less stationary, and more migratory. I should think I was doing more to advance God's purposes, and to prepare for the end of the world, by preaching the Gospel to a million of people, than by acting the pastor to a hundred churches of Christ: for so it is written—"This Gospel of the kingdom must first be preached unto all nations for a testimony unto them, and then shall the end come."

CONTROVERSIAL PIECES.





## MODERATE CALVINISM RE-EXAMINED.

### INTRODUCTION.

August 21, 1860.

I AM sitting down to a critical examination of the remarks which have been made by several reviewers on my last work—"Lectures on Redemption."\*

I am entitled to do this, not merely on the general ground that all remarks in such a case are fairly open to examination, but on the special ground, also, that the reviewers whom I mean to notice have both paid serious attention to what I have advanced, and written earnestly in opposition to me. It so happens that the theological system I have advocated constitutes the middle path between two extremes, these extremes being Hyper-Calvinism on the one hand and Arminianism on the other; in the position I have taken, consequently, I am liable to assault from two opposite parties, and both of them have frankly and strenuously done their duty towards me. On the part of the Hyper-Calvinists, the *Primitive Church Magazine* for January, and the *Gospel Herald* for March and April, have replied to me; and the *General Baptist Magazine* has done so on the part of the Arminians, in its number for February. Under these circumstances I am more than entitled to examine their criticisms—I am *required* to do it. It is due to my reviewers, as a token of respect in return for the respect they have shown to me; it is due to myself, that I may accept whatever help they may have afforded towards a modification, if truth should require it, of my doctrinal views; and it is due also to those who have given to my works an attentive perusal, and especially to my brethren in the ministry, on whom, according to one of my reviewers, they have been largely

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\* This work forms part of Volume V. of the present series.

influential.\* A serious evil indeed would it be if I should have been a fallacious guide ; and I ought not, consequently, to fail of improving to the utmost the opportunity now afforded me of testing anew the views I have advocated.

I sit down to this examination not in any degree of ill-humour with either myself or my reviewers. As to myself, my rejoicing is this, the testimony of my own conscience that, with simplicity and godly sincerity, I have sought after the truth as it is in Jesus ; and that I so sincerely seek it still as unspeakably to prefer the abandonment of an opinion to the vindication of it, if truth demands the sacrifice. As to my reviewers, they really have said so many kind and respectful things of me, and have done me so much honour by the earnestness with which they have entered into argument with me, that I have only to offer to each of them in turn my grateful acknowledgments.

I may as well notice in this place a passage in which one of my reviewers exposes what he considers to be "the great vice" of my theological system.

"The one great vice," says my reviewer in the *Primitive Church Magazine*, "that pervades and deteriorates the entire theological system of Mr. Hinton, is that of making reason the judge of the various dispensations of God. Apart from this, his general views are otherwise sound and scriptural, and [they] become obscure and erroneous only when he adopts reason as his guide in *theorizing* on the great mysteries of revelation."

And in a subsequent sentence in the same page he represents me as endeavouring to "adapt the divine government to the dictates or conclusions of our reason."

Now I plead absolutely NOT GUILTY to this indictment ; and, as no proof is adduced in support of it, it is scarcely needful that I should notice the argumentation founded upon it. From a careful examination of the Scriptures, I certainly have arrived at the conviction that the ways of God, as revealed in the Bible, *are* in harmony with human reason, and I have endeavoured to illustrate this harmony : if this be a crime, I acknowledge myself guilty of it ; but this, at any rate, is a very different thing from either "making

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\* Speaking of my "Theology," the reviewer in the *Gospel Herald* says it is a work "which, together with subsequent volumes by the same author, has, we believe, done more to mould the rising ministry of the denomination than any other influence that could be named."

reason the judge" of them, or from "adapting them to the conclusions of reason." I claim to institute as candid and impartial an examination of divine revelation as its supreme authority demands, and as if I held no opinion at all respecting its relation to human reason; and then, if afterwards I find them in harmony, I say so. Now I think the fair way of meeting me on this point is, not to say, "You make reason the judge of revelation," which, indeed, is untrue; but to enter with me on an unembarrassed consideration of revelation itself, leaving it afterwards to appear whether anything contrary to reason has been elicited from it.

As the reviewer probably refers to my work entitled "The Harmony of Religious Truth and Human Reason," published in 1832, and (I am sorry to say) not now in print,\* I will here make a short extract from it, which will serve to show at once the ground which I took at that early period of my career as a theological writer, and its identity with that which I now occupy:—

"I do not mean that religious truth consists of nothing more than the dictates of human reason, or that reason is a sufficient guide to the acquisition and discovery of it. The absolute necessity and inestimable value of divine revelation I hold as fundamental principles; and maintain only that the truths of religion, being discovered, approve themselves to our reason, and harmonize with the common sense of mankind."—*Works*, vol. i., p. 185.

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## CHAPTER I.

### ON THE COVENANT OF EDEN.

AMONG the topics which my reviewers have noticed, the first is naturally the federal headship of Adam.

My reviewer in the *Primitive Church Magazine* introduces his remarks on this subject with a flourish of trumpets after the following fashion:—

"Mr. Hinton having apparently set himself to the task of reconciling the administrations of God towards man with some cherished

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\* This work appears in Vol. I. of the present series.

conclusions of reason, he has, in frequent instances, involved himself in difficulties and confusion from which no amount of mere theorizing can ever deliver him. His laboured attempt to 'explain away' the doctrine of the federal headship of Adam is one of these, and we sincerely regret to be obliged to state that we have never met with a more signal failure on the part of a confessedly able man."

To this premature vaunt I reply only in the words of ancient wisdom, "Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off" (1 Kings xx. 11).

Of my views on this subject my reviewer in the *Gospel Herald*, with greater fairness, gives the following summary:—

"Mr. Hinton's idea of the 'proximate cause,' or immediate occasion, of redemption may be thus expressed. Adam was constituted the federal head of his posterity in such a manner that they were prospectively involved in the results of his probation, whatever they might be. The threatening denounced against our first parents included natural, spiritual, and eternal death; and accordingly, when they fell, such was their doom, and that of their posterity. But, immediately upon Adam's transgression, the covenant of Eden was *suspended* by the introduction of a new element—the bringing in of a new dispensation—that of divine mercy, under which all his posterity are placed.

"This is, we think (the reviewer continues), a fair representation of Mr. Hinton's system on this subject, and it will be seen that it involves the following things: 1st. That the Eden covenant has now no existence in regard to any portion or any individual of mankind. Mr. H. calls it 'an abolished system.' 2nd. That mankind are *not*, as is generally believed, subject to death on account of Adam's sin, whether natural, moral, or penal death. 3rd. That mankind are placed under a new and personal probation, having no reference whatever to Adam's transgression."

This "representation of Mr. Hinton's system," although doubtless fairly intended, is not perfectly accurate.

1. I have given no sanction to the use of the word "posterity," as it is twice employed in this passage. In the first case my reviewer makes me say that Adam was "the federal head of his *posterity*;" whereas what I have really said is that Adam was "the federal head of his *race*" ("Lectures," p. 325). The meaning is very different. The *human race* did not necessarily imply *posterity*; it *might* have consisted of its first two members only. In the second instance, my reviewer makes me say that, when our first parents fell, natural, spiritual, and eternal death constituted not only *their* doom, but "that of their *posterity*:" that of the *race*, if the reviewer pleases, but not that of a posterity, which, according to my view of the covenant, was, contingently on transgression, to have no existence.



2. It is, perhaps, by a typographical error that the reviewer represents me as saying that "the covenant of Eden was *suspended* by the introduction of a new element." What I have said is that the covenant of Eden was *super-seded*. Whether there is much difference between the two my reader shall judge for himself; but I like my own word better than that which the reviewer has put in my mouth.

3. The second inference drawn by the reviewer from his statement does not correctly express my meaning. It is "that man is *not*, as is generally believed, subject to death on account of Adam's sin, whether natural, moral, or penal\* death." Now my idea is, and I am sorry if I have not stated it with sufficient plainness, that mankind *are* subject to natural and moral death "on account of Adam's sin." On this point my reviewer evidently misunderstands me. I have said, indeed, that these results of the "original sin" are *permitted to remain* under the new system; but this rather presupposes than negatives their introduction by that sin, and affords small ground for saying, as my reviewer does, that I represent them as "sovereign *appointments*" of God.

"We will first examine," says my reviewer in the *Herald*, "upon what ground Mr. Hinton contends for the repeal of the Eden covenant. Surely the ground must be very firm to bear so weighty a superstructure as the abrogation of an entire dispensation. It will scarcely be credited by some that it entirely rests on the words, 'In the day that thou eatest thou shalt surely die.' This language, Mr. Hinton contends, means that Adam was threatened with immediate corporeal death in case of transgression; and that, if this threat had been strictly carried out, he would not have existed an hour† after his fall, and consequently his posterity would have had no existence; but seeing that he *did* live, and *had* a posterity, the threatening was *not* executed, which could only be by the Eden covenant, of which it forms a part, being altogether repealed, both as regards himself and his posterity."

On this statement of my views we have the following remarks:—

"Nothing in our view can be clearer, from the whole tenor of the Old Testament, than that the words 'in the day' are commonly employed to denote a continuous, and often a long, period. How often, for instance, in the prophetic writings, is the phrase employed to set

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\* This, of course, is a misprint for *eternal*.

† This phraseology is not mine. Its exaggerated character indicates a little of the controversial spirit.

forth the entire Gospel dispensation, or a period during which various successive events referred to should transpire! In fact, such is its frequent acceptation in our own and other languages. Had the selfsame day of twenty-four hours been intended, the Hebrew would have been the same as in those passages where such a meaning is evidently required, as in Gen. vii. 11, 13. Whereas in this case the Hebrew is different, being the same as others in which a continuous period is clearly conveyed."

In the Appendix to my "Lectures"\* I have dealt so fully with the critical argument as brought forward by Dr. Payne, that I may, perhaps, here beg the favour of a reference to it. I add in this place only a few words. My reviewer says, "Had the selfsame day of twenty-four hours been intended, the Hebrew would have been the same as in those passages where such a meaning is evidently required, as in Gen. vii. 11, 13." Let a glance, then, be taken at these passages.

Genesis vii. 11. "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, *in that day* were the fountains of the great deep broken up."

Now to me it is obvious that the phrase "*in that day*" is here specially required by the construction of the sentence in which it occurs, and that the word "*that*," which forms a part of it, has the force of the relative pronoun. The phrase "*in that day*" means, not in a day of twenty-four hours, but in the particular day which had just been named "in the six hundredth year of Noah's life."

Genesis vii. 13. "*In the selfsame day* entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark; they, and every beast after his kind," &c. In this case there is evidently another idea conveyed. The meaning is, not that all these entered into the ark in a day of twenty-four hours, but that they all entered into it in one and the same day; the phrase "*the selfsame*" having the force of an adjective.

It is clear, therefore, that the phrases used in these passages are not the Hebrew form for expressing a day of twenty-four hours, and that there is, consequently, no reason why the phrase in Gen. ii. 17 should be similar to them. Whether the Hebrew in this place is the same as that "in

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\* This Appendix is now placed as a Note at the end of this chapter.

which a continuous period is clearly conveyed," might have been more easily ascertained if an example or two had been given; but I venture to lay it down as a rule, of which I challenge the investigation, that the simple phrase "*in the day*" will never be found to denote "a continuous period," unless there be something in the context to indicate this meaning, which in Gen. ii. 17 there is not.

Ignoring the critical argument as "a mere logomachy," my reviewer in the *Primitive Church Magazine* argues generally as follows:—

"Mr. Hinton is singularly unhappy in his attempt to prove that the *immediate* infliction of the penalty of death upon Adam's body was intended by the threatening 'in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;' and that the penalty was not so inflicted in consequence of the repeal of the covenant of Eden. His object in this mode of arguing is to overthrow the *continuous* federal headship of Adam, and to infer support to his favourite dogma that none of Adam's posterity would ever come under the *curse* of that federal covenant. To say the least, his view of the penalty is low and grovelling; he confines it almost entirely to the body of Adam, to the great neglect of its higher and more awful significance. He forgets his own admission (pp. 6, 7), that the penalty took place upon Adam *immediately*; hence his guilty dread at the approach of God, his vain and imbecile attempt to hide himself from his Maker, and his readiness to transfer the guilt of his own transgression to her whom it was his duty to screen and protect. Every noble principle of his nature had evidently departed, and to all that was good and holy he was already dead. The death of the body was but the effect of that of the soul; and Mr. H. requires not to be told that, though effects follow their causes with a dread and direful certainty, yet, in the moral government of God, they frequently follow at a great distance."

My reviewer does not speak accurately in saying I have attempted to prove "that the *immediate* infliction of the penalty of death upon Adam's body was intended by the threatening." What I have said is that the threatening, as a whole, including natural, spiritual, and eternal death, was to be executed "*in the day*" when transgression was committed. My reviewer seems to think that, because I admit spiritual death to have occurred *immediately* after transgression, I ought either to hold natural death to be of equally immediate occurrence, which it was not, or to allow for it an indefinite period. I do not feel myself shut up to this alternative. The language of the threatening is, "*in the day*;" and I abide by it—I think safely.

When my reviewer says that my "view of the penalty is

low and grovelling, confined almost entirely to the *body* of Adam, to the great neglect of its higher and more awful significance," he evidently writes under an impression that I have laid a peculiar stress upon Adam's natural death. I am at a loss to conjecture from whence this impression can have been derived. Doubtless, the entire threatening, in my view, stood for fulfilment in that day, but not the death of the body only. What my reviewer means when he says that "the death of the body was but the effect of that of the soul," I must frankly confess I do not understand; or why, if moral corruption has an adaptation to kill the body, it should be nearly a thousand years in doing its work. I rest in the scriptural representation that death to the race was the direct consequence of Adam's sin.

I now notice an argument of my reviewer in the *Gospel Herald*, in the following terms:—

"Now it will be seen that, upon this system, the Eden covenant was made only to be repealed immediately on occasion arising for its enforcement! It had thus no substantive existence at all, for the consequences that followed upon Adam's transgression are, according to Mr. Hinton, no parts of its threatening, but the elements of a new dispensation. We maintain, then, that in the suspension or abolition of the Adamic covenant, which Mr. Hinton contends for, he has set aside that covenant, and the federal headship of Adam, altogether. All that Mr. Hinton's system contains is a command given, and its being broken; all the consequences that follow arise, not from the command being broken, but from something altogether new and different, viz., from the transgressor being placed under a new probation, in which some of the elements of the abolished system are retained. Could Mr. Hinton have done more, had he aimed to prove the Eden covenant to be a mere figment of the imagination, and a delusion altogether? What covenant can that be that never comes into force, even when occasion arises to require it? and what federal headship can that be, that entails no consequences whatever on those who are comprehended under it?"

My reviewer has here written as if the Eden covenant was framed with the single purpose of punishing transgression, overlooking what was assuredly its other, and more benign aspect, its intention to reward obedience. He argues that, if the curse was not inflicted, the covenant could never come into force, there being, he thinks, no other possible occasion than sin to require it; and that, if a federal headship entails no calamity, it entails "no consequences whatever." Did he at the moment forget—for I cannot suppose him ignorant—that another occasion might have arisen to



bring the covenant into force, namely, the fulfilment of the precept; and that the federal headship would then have entailed large blessings, although no calamities?

Even this fallacious conclusion, however, my reviewer draws from inaccurate premises. "The consequences that followed upon Adam's transgression," says he, "are, according to Mr. Hinton, no parts of the threatening, but the elements of a new dispensation." Some injustice is done to me here. In the first place, I have nowhere said that death and moral corruption ("the consequences that followed upon Adam's transgression") are "THE elements of a new dispensation." It is quite a different thing, I think, to say that they are "*elements* of a new dispensation,"—some among many, minor and subordinate elements connected with greater and more leading ones. In the second place, I have nowhere said that death and moral corruption were "no parts of the threatening." On the contrary, I have distinctly maintained that they *were* "parts of the threatening," and that they ensued under it; only that they were not, like the liability to eternal death, done away by the dispensation of mercy, but in sovereign wisdom retained, as "elements of the abolished system" congruous with the probationary design of the new. The Eden covenant, therefore, according to my view, *did* come into force, even with respect to punishment, and the federal headship *did* entail calamity.

My reviewer in the *Primitive Church Magazine* argues against my view on this point, as "weakening in no mean degree the claims of the covenant of Christ as a system of pure mercy to our world."

"Where," says he, "it may very properly be asked, is there a single passage in the whole compass of revelation that warrants this imputation? Where are we instructed to believe that 'the dispensation of divine mercy, through Jesus Christ' (p. 329), has received into its scheme of operation 'death and moral corruption,' &c., as 'elements of trial, fitly grafted on' the Gospel of the grace of God? It is utterly impossible, on the face of it, that a system of pure mercy should have imported into its own circle of action, and employed as elements of its own triumphs over the powers of darkness, the very evils which it exists to destroy. 'I am come,' said the blessed Saviour, 'that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' Of him it is emphatically declared that he 'hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light.' He announced his purpose in the sublime prophecy—'O Death, I will be thy plagues! O Grave, I will be thy destruction!' That, notwithstanding these, and a large number of similar declarations, to assert



that the Saviour employs in his holy system, as 'elements of trial,' the death and corruption which he came purposely to destroy, is to maintain a plain contradiction, and to broach a doctrine for which there exists not a shadow of scriptural proof. In truth, a doctrine more Antinomian in its tendency could scarcely be conceived, and it would require but slight dexterity to turn it into the service of men who 'continue in sin that grace may abound.' For if the great Saviour admits into his system of mercy 'moral corruption,' which is sin, as 'congruous with its nature and design,' surely it cannot be wrong for a man to indulge in that 'congruity,' when, according to Mr. Hinton, he can plead the divine example for his justification."

The last thrust made at me in this passage I would at once acknowledge to be, not only a serious, but a fatal one, if I felt that I was fairly open to it. Undoubtedly, the Saviour does not employ *sin* for the glory of his grace. I have never said, however, that "moral corruption" is sin. My reviewer says so, and argues accordingly; but I deny his premises, and feel no force in his conclusion. Undoubtedly, the phrase "moral corruption" may be used in a sense entirely synonymous with sin; but this is not necessary, and I have been careful to guard my use of the phrase by another which shows that this is not my meaning in employing it. In a passage which is quoted by this reviewer, I speak of "the moral corruption, *or bias to evil*, inherited from Adam." Our moral nature suffered a mischief by Adam's transgression. The race became prone to sin; there was in it thenceforth a bias to evil, a fact which I have expressed by the equivalent phrase, moral corruption. Now a bias to evil, in my conception of it, is not sin, or sinful, since it implies neither action nor volition; it is a condition of our moral being tending to the production of sin, and requiring appropriate restraint—no more. And as such it is, I conceive, not incongruous with a state of moral probation.

My reviewer, perhaps, may be unwilling at first to give up his position that moral corruption is sin, because of the valuable service which it seems here to render him; but I venture to ask him whether, upon consideration, he will be able to retain it. That which we are speaking of, whatever may be its best definition, was inflicted by God as part of the punishment of Adam's sin, and as such it fell on the whole human race. Is it possible to conceive that a holy God could, even as a punishment, *make a being sinful?* nay, *make a whole race sinful?* I leave that question for calm and devout thought.

The sting thus taken out of the passage under consideration, the rest will be disposed of with comparative ease. "It is utterly impossible on the face of it," says my reviewer, "that a system of pure mercy should have imported into its own circle of action, and employed, as elements of its own triumphs over the powers of darkness, the very evils which it exists to destroy." On which I remark—First, that death and corruption do actually exist under the dispensation of mercy, and, if the Divine Author of that dispensation has not "imported them into its circle of action," I will thank my reviewer to say how they got there. Secondly, that it is hardly a fair representation of the dispensation of mercy to say that death and corruption are "*the very evils which it exists to destroy.*" There is surely a larger view to be taken of the dispensation of mercy than this. Thirdly, that the new dispensation is not accurately described when it is called "a system of *pure* mercy." What may be the reviewer's exact idea I do not know; but I conceive the new system to be a dispensation of *probationary* mercy, containing grand elements of responsibility and judgment, as well as of overflowing grace, and involving the ultimate infliction of wrath, as well as the gift of eternal life. In such a system I cannot yet see that death, with the entire mass of physical suffering of which the term is representative, and corruption, or the bias to evil, inherited from Adam, are incongruous elements.

My reviewer proceeds:—"Mr. Hinton appears to think that a federal covenant which inflicts punishment by the imputation of guilt contracted by the head, is 'revoltingly in contrast with the wisdom and goodness of God,' p. 330."

Whoever will take the trouble to refer to p. 330 of my "Lectures," will see that I have said no such thing. What I have said is, that, if the Eden covenant had resulted actually in the everlasting perdition of the whole race of man, in its unnumbered multitudes, *such a result* would have been "revoltingly in contrast with the wisdom and goodness of God." Even my reviewer does not say that he thinks otherwise; he only says that "God will take care of his own character," a remark in which I perfectly agree with him, but that is no reason why we should surround it with difficulties alike unscriptural and unnecessary.

He further argues thus:—

"Mr. Hinton should remember that, if federal government *be right at all* (and this he admits more or less directly), it is right to its most

distant issues, and that no check whatever put upon its remote consequences, whether here or hereafter, can change in the slightest degree the moral character of the institute itself. If any of those remote consequences are wrong, it is because the constituted arrangement is wrong, and the cure should be applied *at the heart*, and not at the distant extremities. But is Mr. Hinton prepared to maintain the narrow doctrine, and to support it with equally narrow logic, that the federal covenant of Adam was so 'revoltingly in contrast with the wisdom and goodness of God,' that it required to be terminated in its issues with Adam himself as the original transgressor?"

My reviewer goes on to say on my behalf, that Mr. Hinton "means this, or he means just nothing." I do not, however, "mean this." I have nowhere cast a shadow of imputation, either on the righteousness of federal government in general, or on the excellence of the federal arrangement with our first parent in particular; nor have I anywhere intimated an opinion that "*it required*," on any accidental ground, "to be terminated in its issues with Adam himself." What I have said is, that the covenant with Adam was originally so constituted by its Author, that, if Adam broke it, he should have no posterity. There was no occasion, therefore, that it should be terminated otherwise than according to its proper tenor. According to my view, it never was a part of the covenant that an immense posterity should be eternally miserable for their first father's sin. How could it be so, when its constitution was such that, in case of disobedience, no posterity should exist?

"The covenant of Eden," says my reviewer, "like that of grace, must be taken *as a whole*, or rejected *as a whole*. . . . If the covenant of Eden be accepted *as a whole* (and who may break it into parts?) Mr. Hinton's theory crumbles into dust." That the covenant of Eden must be taken as a whole, I admit; the only question between me and my reviewer is, what is *the whole* of that covenant? He evidently thinks that it contained a provision entailing, in case of Adam's disobedience, eternal misery upon a lengthened, and all but innumerable, posterity; while I, on the contrary, think that an arrangement was included in it by which, in case of disobedience, no posterity should come into being. According to my view of the covenant, I as truly take it as a whole as he does.

"If it be true," my reviewer goes on to say, "that 'in Adam all die,' it remains with Mr. Hinton to demonstrate

that the actual results of the covenant of Eden have not passed upon all men." It is undoubtedly true "that in Adam all die," and that in this respect one actual result of the covenant of Eden has passed upon all men. Will my reviewer establish on scripture testimony the assertion that in Adam all are for ever lost? This would end the controversy at once. He asks, indeed, "Can there be results more comprehensive, or more universal, than that 'in Adam *all* die'?" Not "more universal," certainly, but "*more comprehensive*" results I think there may be. The words are taken from 1 Cor. xv. 22, where the subject on which the apostle is treating is the resurrection, and where death, therefore, must be understood in its strict and ordinary sense, and not in such a latitude as to comprehend *all* the threatened results of disobedience under the covenant of Eden.

"Deny or limit 'the actual results' of that covenant," continues my reviewer, "and then on no known principle can we account for punishment apart from *personal* transgression." My answer to this is, that I neither deny nor limit "the actual results" of the Eden covenant. I fully admit that they accrued to the persons on whom the covenant entailed them; I only maintain that the covenant did not entail them as "actual results" on a multitudinous posterity, which, according to its tenor, were, on the contingency of transgression, not to exist.

An important part of the argument in relation to the Adamic covenant, is the passage in the epistle to the Romans, chap. v. 12 *fin*. On this subject my reviewer speaks as follows:—

"If we go to Holy Scripture, we read that 'by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation' (Rom. v. 18); but if we go to Mr. Hinton, he assures us,—'You will clearly understand that your relation to your first parent places you under no peril of divine displeasure' (p. 332). Now, which authority are we to believe? If Mr. Hinton be right, then Paul certainly did not understand his subject; but, if the apostle were right, then the doctrine of Mr. Hinton is both unsriptural and dangerous.

"As this is the pivot on which the whole theory of Mr. Hinton appears to turn, our readers will excuse a trespass on their patience by a more extended examination of this particular part. Mr. H., conceiving that a plain, straightforward, common-sense interpretation of Rom. v. 12, 18, 19, &c., would be fatal to his entire system, resorts to the 'shuffling efforts' (p. 327) common to all weak theories, by attempting a totally new exposition of that important portion of Holy Scripture. He says—'There are two ways in which this language may



be interpreted. It may be understood of the actual results of the covenant of Eden, on the one hand, or of its principle and tenor apart from its actual results, on the other. Now, to understand it of the actual results of the covenant of Eden is in the highest degree unsatisfactory, not only as revoltingly in contrast with the wisdom and goodness of God, but as altogether inconsistent with other scriptural representations of the spiritual condition of mankind,' p. 330. Now, if this be not to darken counsel by words without knowledge, or an attempt to evade, by mystifying, scripture authority, we do not know what darkness or evasion means. Why attempt to separate between 'the actual results of the covenant of Eden on the one hand,' and 'its principle and tenor *apart from its results*,' on the other? What end, save that of mystification, can such a process serve? What but a system of 'subterfuges' (p. 327) would require to separate what the government of God has so clearly joined together?"

I am not careful to clear myself from the imputations here cast on the simplicity of my motives, of which, I am thankful to recollect, my reviewer is not the judge; nor am I at all disposed to resent the use of some hard words, which, I perceive, are culled from my own pages, and which I deserve, perhaps, to have thus thrown back in my teeth. It is true, no doubt, that such an interpretation of Romans v. as my reviewer calls "plain and straightforward" would be fatal to my doctrinal scheme; I ought not, however, for that reason to eschew it. I do, in fact, take a totally different ground, and say that the passage *cannot* be so interpreted consistently with other passages of Scripture. In immediate continuation of the passage which the reviewer quotes, I speak thus:—"According to the same apostle, in the same letter, 'the wrath of God is revealed,' but it is 'against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men' (ch. i. 18), not against men as fallen in their first parent. In the second chapter he lays it down as a first principle, that God 'will render to every man according to his deeds' (ch. ii. 6, 11). It is quite obvious that, in their absolute and unqualified sense, the passages thus cited contradict those in the fifth chapter, and that, consequently, they cannot both be in such sense true. If men are to be judged by their own works, it is perfectly clear that they cannot be condemned for the sin of Adam. Driven from this mode of interpretation, therefore, we have of necessity recourse to the other" ("Lectures," p. 330). I ought, perhaps, to apologize to my readers for this extract from my own volume; but I have deemed it necessary to repeat the answer which was thus given by anticipation to the questions



here so triumphantly asked by the reviewer, but an answer of which he omits all notice—conveniently for himself, no doubt, but surely not with justice, either to his readers or to me. I now ask him pointedly, whether, in the face of this difficulty, he can, or does, take Rom. v. 12, 18, in an absolute and unqualified, or in what he calls a “plain and straightforward,” sense? If he does, I then ask him how he understands Rom. ii. 6, 11? If he does not, I ask him, finally, how, with a good conscience, he can employ Rom. v. 12, 18 against me?

It appears to me, that the place in the epistle which is occupied by the passage in question, demonstrates that it is not to be understood as descriptive of the ruined condition of mankind. In the natural order of thought, the exposition of the ruined condition of mankind would come to be first expounded, before the opening of the method of deliverance from it. And such is the fact; the whole of the epistle, from the commencement of the argument in chap. i. 16 to the exposition of the Gospel in chap. iii. 20, being devoted to a detailed statement of human iniquity as equally involving Jew and Gentile, and a solemn announcement of “the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.” Now, if in reality a principal part, or any part, of the ruin of mankind consisted in a liability to eternal perdition on account of Adam’s transgression, is it not remarkable that, in so full and so elaborate a development of the subject, no notice whatever should have been taken of this particular? Throughout his whole argument Paul is as silent on it as if Adam had never existed. That he treats of the federal headship sustained by the first parent of our race in the latter part of the fifth chapter, is true; but he has then got far beyond the condition of ruin: he has expatiated, through the latter part of the third chapter and the whole of the fourth, on the method by which God “might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus,” and through more than half the fifth chapter he has luxuriated in setting forth the happiness of “being justified by faith:” is it to be supposed that he now returns to man’s condition of misery and ruin, and makes a fragmentary and dislocated addition to a description already so complete?

Nothing could be less like Paul as a writer than this. And, in truth, the manner in which he introduces the sub-

ject makes it plain that his object is entirely different. He wants an illustration of *the principle* of the work of redemption, and he derives one from *the principle* of the covenant of Eden. He begins, therefore, not by way of statement, but of comparison, thus: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned;" (resuming, after a parenthetical explanation of five verses) "therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men to justification of life."

It may be said that such a comparison implies the truth of the facts stated, as otherwise no proper foundation for the comparison would exist. The reply to this is, that the facts, so far as they are referred to by the apostle, are true. It might seem that the phrase, "by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation," would include the entire contents of the Eden threatening—natural, spiritual, and eternal death: when the whole passage is examined, however, it becomes manifest that the apostle is referring to natural death exclusively, and that he contemplates nothing beyond it. This is admitted by one of my reviewers to be the case in the early part of it—"By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men"—and there is no warrant whatever for giving a greater extension to the latter.

In confirmation of this view, a reference may not unsuitably be made to the method of apostolic preaching, which, to a considerable extent, is laid open to us in the book of Acts, and which would naturally display to us the grounds on which the apostles represented the condition of their hearers as one of guilt and danger. Now it is observable, that not in a single instance do they exhibit mankind as lost through Adam. Certainly not in Peter's discourse on the day of Pentecost, recorded in Acts ii.; nor in that of Peter and John, recorded in Acts iii. (see ver. 19); nor in that of Peter to Cornelius and his friends, recorded in Acts x.; nor in that of Paul at Antioch, recorded in Acts xiii. (see ver. 38, 39); nor in that of Paul at Athens, recorded in Acts xvii.; nor in that of Paul to the Jews at Rome, recorded in Acts xxviii. Is it not strange that, if all mankind are subject to eternal perdition for Adam's sin, these inspired preachers of the

Gospel never once announced to their hearers, Jewish or pagan, so serious a fact, or said a single word explanatory of the relation to it of the great salvation which they preached?

### NOTE.

In a note to his Congregational Lectures (Note B, p. 406), Dr. Payne has been kind enough to examine my views in relation to the Adamic covenant, as he found them stated in my "Harmony of Religious Truth" (Works, vol. i). And he brings against them two objections, to which I avail myself of this opportunity of replying.

One of these objections is critical, the other argumentative.

The critical objection is thus stated:—"Mr. Hinton has no right to assume, as he does, as if the point could not be disputed, that the words 'in the day' necessarily mean 'the *very* day,' 'the *same* day,' &c. This latter idea, as the text states, is indicated by a different formula."

Now, it is true that I did not introduce Hebrew criticism into my volume of popular Essays. Let me be forgiven; I will endeavour to pay due attention to it now.

Referring, then, to the text of Dr. Payne's Lecture, I find the following words: "The main truth taught by the words 'In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,' is certain legal liability to death. They do not imply, as at first sight they appear to do, the infliction of the sentence at the very moment of transgression, but instant and necessary exposure to its infliction," p. 59.

And Dr. Payne strengthens his position by a note taken from Holden's "Dissertation on the Fall of Man," to the following purport: "The declaration, 'In the day that thou eatest thou shalt surely die,' does not mean that death should be inflicted on the selfsame day in which the offence was committed, but that they should *then* be subject to death; that the sentence of death should be executed at the

time appointed by their Creator. It is not said *בְּיוֹם הַזֶּה*, or *הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה*, *בְּעֵצָם הַיּוֹם*, in that day, or in that same day, but simply *בְּיוֹם*, in that [the] day; and the word day is sometimes used in Scripture generally for an indefinite time, as may be seen in the lexicons," p. 20.

I will examine the points here brought forward in the order in which they present themselves to me.

1. "The word day is sometimes used in Scripture generally for an indefinite time." Perhaps so: but, wherever this is the case, there is, no doubt, some evidence of it; and there is no evidence of such a use of the word in the passage before us. None is either adduced, or pretended, by the critics themselves.

2. "It is not said *בְּיוֹם הַזֶּה*, or *בְּעֵצָם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה*, in that day, or in that same day, but simply *בְּיוֹם*, in that [the] day." Now, it

strikes me, that all the difference that exists among these phrases is, that one is more emphatic than another; in their *meaning* I cannot see that there is any difference at all.

3. The phrases here cited, *in that day*, and *in the selfsame day*, occur in Genesis vii. The first of them in ver. 11: "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, in the seven-teenth day of the month, *in that day* were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened."

The second phrase occurs in ver. 13: "*In the selfsame day* entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark; they, and every beast after his kind," &c.

Now it is manifest, I think, that in both these instances, the connexion requires the emphatic phrases employed, in order to convey the meaning of the writer. In chap. ii. 17, there is no such necessity, the meaning being fully conveyed by the simple expression, *in the day*.

4. If, however, בַּיּוֹם, *in the day*, does not mean *in the same day*, I ask, What does it mean? None of the critics have assigned any other meaning to it. Does it mean, *some other day*, *about that day*, or *a thousand years afterwards*? I find no answer to this question.

5. In point of fact, both the critics assign the same meaning to it as myself, namely, *in that day*. Thus Holden—"that they should *then* be subject to death." And Dr. Payne—not instant death, "but instant . . . exposure to its infliction." It thus appears that there is no difference between myself and them as to the meaning of the phrase *in the day*, but only in relation to the threatening "thou shalt die." Whatever this means, they hold it to have ensued *in that day*, as distinctly as I do.

6. In further illustration, Dr. Payne refers to the case of Shimei, to whom Solomon said—"On the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die" (1 Kings ii. 37). Dr. Payne argues that the meaning of this menace was, not that Shimei should be slain on the day of his leaving Jerusalem, but that on that day his life should be forfeited. This, however, is quite beside the mark; for, whatever was the meaning of the words "thou shalt die," they were, by the doctor's own showing, to take effect "on the day" of his leaving Jerusalem. I confess my own suspicion, too, that Solomon would have slain Shimei on that day, if he could have caught him.

7. It is the more remarkable that Dr. Payne should object to my understanding of the phrase, *in the day*, because, in the sense in which he takes the threatening *thou shalt die*, it is the only meaning which can, by any possibility, be assigned to it. If the evil intended had been literally *death*, there might have been some excuse, under the circumstances of Adam's continued life, for understanding the phrase, *in the day*, of some other day, and not of *the selfsame day*; but Dr. Payne says that the threatening, "*thou shalt die*," meant, *thy life shall be forfeited*. I ask, then, when could this have happened, but *in the day—the selfsame day*—in which the transgression was committed?

So much for the critical objection, now for the argumentative one.



I have stated my opinion that Adam, in case of his transgression, would have had no posterity; and I have at the same time admitted that his posterity, as now existing, suffer evils which are consequences of his transgression, and would be liable to the curse itself but for the interposition of divine mercy by Christ. These statements, according to Dr. Payne, are so directly opposed to one another as to be mutually contradictory; and he kindly expresses his surprise that a writer of so much perspicacity as he allows me to possess should not have perceived this. Duly acknowledging the compliment thus paid me, I will proceed to an examination of the argument.

Dr. Payne's words are as follows: "The curse attached to the Adamic covenant in reference to the race . . . [according to Mr. Hinton] was simply that the race should not be; not that its members should exist in sorrow and pain, but that they should not exist at all. Now, I am unable to reconcile with this certain other statements in Essay Sixth of 'The Harmony of Religious Truth,' Mr. Hinton maintains truly, as I think, the 'universal reference' of the atonement. And he says, 'If there be any, whether infants or others, for whom Christ did not die, then they, of course, must remain under their first father's curse, since it is only by virtue of Christ's death that this ever can be remitted,' p. 281. But their first father's curse, so far as they are concerned in it, was, that they should not exist. To remain under that curse is, on this hypothesis, to remain out of being; but they are in being," pp. 407, 408.

And after presenting several phases of this argument, all on the same principle, he sums up thus: "I particularly request the reader to observe the gist of my argument. It is this, that, if the Adamic covenant threatened, in case of transgression, non-existence to the race, it could not threaten a life of sorrow to be terminated by death; that, if non-existence was to be the consequence of rebellion, the sorrow or depravity of the race cannot possibly be its consequence," p. 411.

Nothing can be more lucid and conclusive than this argumentation, granting the author of it his premises; but I think a flaw exists in these which vitiates the whole.

Dr. Payne represents the non-existence of the race in case of Adam's transgression to be, according to my view, "*the curse attached to the Adamic covenant in reference to the race.*" Now, certainly, I have never said any such thing, nor have I ever entertained any such idea. When I read it here for the first time, the ascription of this conception to me took me quite by surprise; but the doctor, of course, thought it was implied in my views, and he reasons upon it accordingly. And I allow that, if it can be logically fastened upon me, I am worsted in this argument; but let me attempt an explanation.

I do not admit anything to constitute the curse of the Adamic covenant, but the single sentence, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;" and this, as I have opened it in my earlier writings, and in the present volume, is surely curse enough. It is true, that other things followed the transgression, as sorrow, pain, and toil; and Dr. Payne speaks of these as though they also were a part of the curse. But is this way of regarding the matter just? These elements are certainly not included in the threatening, and



they are in fact incompatible with it; nor is anything said of them until the whole dispensation has been manifestly altered by the announcement and promise of a Redeemer. If it is asked, How, then, came these sources of human sorrow to exist? I reply, that the same sovereignty which, by an interposition of mercy, superseded the curse, with the entire economy to which it belonged, was at liberty to associate with man's new condition such elements of disciplinary and probationary suffering as might seem good. There were, therefore, sorrows which, although consequent upon the fall, were not portions of the curse.

In like manner, the non-existence of the race, which was evidently contingent in case of transgression, would have been a consequence of the fall, yet not contained in the curse. The curse denounced against Adam's posterity was identical with that denounced against himself—"Ye shall die:" their actual non-existence in case of transgression would have been a collateral and incidental result, not threatened, although contingent, and, in fact, of most felicitous operation.

It is to be admitted, that *some* things which were actually consequent on the fall were also included in the curse; as the deterioration of man's moral nature, and the occurrence of death. These I hold to have been retained by divine sovereignty as permanent elements of man's condition, because they were deemed congruous with it as a condition of probation and discipline; but I cannot regard them as parts of the curse, which a merciful dispensation had wholly superseded, or as processes of punishment in a state of probation, a state from which the idea of punishment is altogether remote. I do not say they are benefits; on the contrary, I admit that they are evils, but I cannot admit them to be *penal* evils.

My reply to Dr. Payne, then, is simply this, that the Adamic covenant did not, in case of transgression, threaten non-existence to the race; to them, as to their first father, it threatened death, and only death. The contingent non-existence of the race I hold to be *an incidental result not threatened*. If this is granted me, Dr. Payne's charge of contradiction entirely falls. If it is not, it will require to be proved that every evil which has followed on the fall was included in the threatening; which, I believe, has not yet been done. Will any one try his hand at it?

Before concluding this note, I may say a word or two on what I conceive to be a very important difference between myself and Dr. Payne, together with the large class of writers with whom he agrees. Of the threatening, "In the day that thou eatest thou shalt surely die," he holds the meaning to be, Thenceforth thou shalt be liable to death at any time, and sure to die at some time.

Now, I do not mean to repeat here what I have said in my first Lecture on this interpretation of the threatening; but I wish, in addition, to ask respecting it this question—Why should a future and remote character be given to one of the consequences of the fall, while it is not given to others?

Dr. Payne comprehends in the threatening the doom of sorrow and toil, and these followed transgression immediately. He includes in it also the forfeiture of what he calls "chartered blessings," and the loss of these, of course, was immediate. Why not, then, death also?

On what ground can such a distinction be made between the several results of one and the same act, and results ensuing in fulfilment of one and the same brief threatening? Utterly without intimation or evidence, is it not arbitrary and unwarrantable?

The reply to this question, of course, will be, that, although such a distinction is not indicated in the Mosaic narrative, the hypothesis is necessary in order to maintain the veracity of God. I demur wholly to this assertion, and put forward the view maintained in the first Lecture. The hypothesis of Dr. Payne is not, in critical justice, even entitled to consideration, until mine is shown to be inadmissible; which, I submit, is not yet done. The doctor, indeed, has made a strenuous effort in this direction, by endeavouring to prove that my view is self-contradictory; but if, as I hope, this thrust has been successfully parried, further examination is challenged, and awaited.

## CHAPTER II.

### ON THE UNIVERSAL ASPECT OF REDEMPTION.

I HAVE now to deal with one reviewer only, the writer in the *Gospel Herald* for April. Of my view on the subject in hand he gives the following unobjectionable summary:—

“The fourth Lecture in this volume treats of the ‘*universal aspect*’ of redemption; the fifth of ‘its *particular aspect*.’ In the former, Mr. Hinton aims to prove from ‘presumptive evidence,’ from ‘facts,’ and from ‘Scripture language,’ that redemption is for *all* men, and then, in the next Lecture, he draws upon the same sources of proof to show that it is for *some* only. But he, of course, takes care to avoid the palpable contradiction between these two statements, by endeavouring to show that redemption is universal in *one* sense, and particular in *another* and a different sense. His position is simply this: On the one hand, Christ died *for all* to give to all a ‘conditional hope’ of salvation, to afford the means of a ‘fresh probation,’ and to manifest God’s general love to mankind; while, on the other hand, he died specially *for some* to render their salvation sure, and to prevent the ‘universal rejection of his redeeming mercy.’ If we ask which of these senses represents God’s *primary* and immediate design in redemption, Mr. Hinton unhesitatingly replies, the *universal* sense. ‘Some,’ he says, ‘maintain that the salvation of his elect was God’s immediate purpose in redemption; for myself, on the contrary, I hold it to be *secondary*.’ ‘The universal aspect has been supplemented by the particular.’ Elsewhere he calls particular redemption a ‘supplementary interposition,’ a something ‘grafted on universal redemption;’ ‘added to it, and founded upon it.’”

The reviewer commences his attack by alleging "that, according to this representation, particular *redemption* disappears altogether, leaving only universal redemption behind."

"For what, we ask, is particular in Mr. Hinton's 'particular redemption'? To this Mr. Hinton replies, 'This at least is particular in redemption, namely, the divine influence by which the heart is subdued to the reception of the Gospel.' But this is regeneration, the work of the Spirit, not the redeeming work of Christ. Again, Mr. Hinton replies, 'The sovereign choice of some to everlasting life; this is particular.' True, but this is election, not redemption. A third time Mr. Hinton replies to the question proposed, 'The intention of Christ actually to save his people; this is particular.'"

Now I complain of the last sentence in this extract as not a fair statement of my view. Whoever will take the trouble to refer to my "Lectures on Redemption," p. 367, will easily satisfy himself that I have not represented the particularity of the work of Christ as consisting in his "intention actually to save his people." My words are "for some only must Christ have died." And I quote two passages—John x. 25: "I lay down my life for the sheep;" and Ephes. v. 25: "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it"—as "speaking plainly of a redeeming work unequivocally restricted." It is with obvious injustice, therefore, that the reviewer says afterwards:—

"Mr. Hinton omits all reference in this treatise to the relation between Christ and those for whom he died. Though redemption is his subject, there is no mention of imputation, representation, or suretyship. This is significant. He is too acute a reasoner not to see that these ideas have no place in his system, though the Scriptures are full of them."

Now, certainly, the Scriptures are not only not "full" of "imputation, representation, and suretyship" *by name*, but absolutely empty of them, since neither of these words occurs in the whole Bible. If the ideas are found there, it is as implied in the passages I have quoted, and in others of a similar tenor; and in quoting the passages as teaching "a redeeming work unequivocally restricted," I might fairly have been assumed to maintain the theoretical views which this interpretation of them supposes. Doubtless, Christ laid down his life *for his sheep* as their representative and surety, and under the specific imputation of their iniquity. Such has always been my doctrinal system, and the reviewer merely raises a question of words.

My reviewer now proceeds to notice the grounds on which I have advocated a universal aspect of redemption. To my observation that "there is a presumption in favour of it," he replies curtly, that "a presumption is not a proof"—admitted: it is, however, a presumption, which is all I have said of it. He then notices the facts from which I have inferred the same thing. I have inferred it, first, from the existence of Adam's posterity. On this he says: "But this will as readily prove particular as universal redemption, since the elect, for whom Christ died, must be brought into existence, for which purpose the race needs as much to be continued as if he died for every individual." No doubt, the race *needed* to be continued; but could such a need have secured the continuance of the race against the threatening of the covenant, unless the dispensation of mercy had, in some sense, comprehended the race? I have inferred it, secondly, from the longsuffering of God towards all men. On this the reviewer quotes the words of the apostle, when he tells us that "the vessels of wrath" are "endured" in order to make known the riches of God's glory on "the vessels of mercy."

•The reader will scarcely need that I should quote in response to this characteristic citation the following: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Rom. ii. 4.) I have inferred it, thirdly, from the resurrection of all men. On this he says, that this event, in the case of the wicked, is "connected with, and in order to, their final judgment and *condemnation*." Why, this is true: but the resurrection of the body, even in the case of the wicked, is a triumph over death, and such a triumph as could not have been gained under the unmodified sentence of the covenant of Eden.

On the next particular my reviewer enters into more serious argument:—

"There is more force," says he, "in the concluding remark on this head, that, if redemption is not 'for all,' why are all invited to partake of its benefits? 'where is the kindness or truthfulness' of 'inviting those for whom there is no provision?' This is a pertinent inquiry; and we know of no way of meeting it, but by the allegation (which Scripture everywhere supports) that all are *not* invited, since for some no provision is made."

I congratulate myself and my reader on the frankness of this admission, which I do not recollect ever to have met



with before. "All are *not* invited." What, then, is the real character of the invitations which to so many have *seemed* to be universal? Hear again the reviewer:—

"The invitations of Scripture are in every case *descriptive* in their character; and, though the description comes down to the lowest and weakest aspects of a renewed state of heart, they are nevertheless those which only divine grace could produce, and which, therefore, clearly separate their possessors from the world at large."

"The invitations of Scripture," it is asserted, "are *in every case descriptive*." The canon is broad, and distinctly laid down; but will it bear application? Let us try it on the great commission, on which, if anywhere, its influence should be manifest. "Go ye, and preach the Gospel to every creature: he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 15, 16). This is, I suppose, of the nature, though not in the terms, of an invitation; it is, at least, a warrant for preachers of the Gospel to address its invitation to every human being. Here, however, there is plainly nothing "descriptive." What was the tenor of our Lord's own ministry? Judge of it from this declaration; "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37). Here is nothing "descriptive." What was the tenor of the apostolic ministry? Harken to Peter on the day of Pentecost: "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts ii. 38). Here is nothing "descriptive." Or harken to Paul in the jail at Philippi: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31). Here is nothing "descriptive." What confidence can we place in a writer who, in the face of such decisive evidence to the contrary, lays it nakedly down that "the invitations of Scripture are *in every case descriptive*"? Perhaps he only means that, in his judgment, they *ought* to be so.

The head of direct scriptural evidence my reviewer treats at greater length:—

"His [Mr. Hinton's] treatment of the passages of Scripture which bear on the subject of redemption is this. They are, he contends, of two classes; some of them bear a universal aspect, and some a particular aspect: let us, therefore, not strive to make the universal particular or the particular universal, but, taking both as they stand, let us find the point of harmony in the redemption itself to which they both refer. Let *this* be understood in a double sense, and both classes of passages are at once explained. Thus Christ died both for the church (Eph. v. 25), and for the world (John iii. 16); for the church in one sense, and the world in another."



The reviewer "demurs altogether to the plan here propounded for the treatment of the Word of God;" and he goes on to explain:—

"With reference to those [texts] in which universal terms are employed, our position is this: (1) The context and general connexion clearly define and restrict their meaning; or, (2) the passages themselves contain the elements of their own limitation. Under the first head we take those passages in which the terms '*world*,' and '*whole world*' occur, and we find them used about one hundred times, and in at least six different senses, but in nearly every instance with a *restricted* universality. In regard to the instances in which they are applied to redemption and salvation, the key is clearly supplied in the eleventh chapter of Romans, where the words '*world*' and '*Gentiles*' are used by the apostle as interchangeable terms. It is not denied that the Jews denominated the rest of mankind as the world, or that they habitually restricted the blessings of Messiah's kingdom to themselves. The fact of this exclusiveness, and the need to remove it by express testimony as to the equal participation of the Gentiles in Gospel blessings, constitute a key to open every text in which the above terms are employed. They teach that the world *distributively considered*, and not Jews only, is comprehended in the divine plan of redemption. The same remarks apply to the terms '*all*' and '*every*' wherever they occur, though sometimes, as in 1 Tim. ii. 4, 6, they also include the idea that persons of no social rank or station, as such, are excluded from an interest in the common salvation. But we have said that the passages under consideration themselves supply the means of their own limitation. They *compel* a meaning more restricted than the terms at first sight appear to convey. For instance, in 1 John ii. 2, either the phrase '*the whole world*' must be limited, or the word *propitiation* must be altered in its meaning, since it is obvious that the guilt of the whole world is *not* propitiated, or covered, by Christ, for myriads at last suffer the penalty of their own transgressions. Now the limitation of the phrase *whole world* accords with the whole tenor of the Scriptures; not so, however, the term *propitiation*, which never signifies anything but the covering, atonement, or expiation of sin, by which the sinner is actually and really covered, and protected from punishment. So in other passages. Unless it can be proved that Christ has really '*ransomed*,' '*saved*,' '*drawn to him*,' and '*taken away the sin*' of, all that have ever lived, or ever will, the doctrine of universal redemption has no place in the Word of God."

I readily admit the general justice of the remarks which the reviewer makes on the use of the terms *the world*, and *the whole world*, as "teaching that the world, distributively considered, and not the Jews only," were comprehended in the divine plan of redemption; and for this reason I would lay no stress in controversy on the following passage: "And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John ii. 2). I think,

however, it may fairly be required, that there should be something in the context, or in the connexion, to indicate this qualification of the meaning. I think, also, that there are instances to which the rule clearly cannot be applied. Let us examine John iii. 16 as an example: "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." There is nothing in this passage, or in its connexion, either to indicate it as a fact, or to authorize it as a presumption, that our Lord was thinking of Jew and Gentile rather than of the whole human race; it is of the latter, therefore, that his language is fairly to be taken. Moreover, there is in the passage itself something that determines the phraseology to this meaning. The scope and extent of the love shown is in the latter part of the verse clearly described:—"God so loved . . . as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." But surely God loved his elect far more than this. Hear what the apostle says when he describes the love of Christ to the church:—"Who loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. v. 25, 26). Are we now to learn that God loved his church only to the effect that whosoever of them should believe should not perish? Is there also a part of the church, as seems to be implied, who will not believe, and will consequently perish? It appears to me, I confess, that the influence here ascribed to the death of Christ both suggests, and constrains, the reference of it to the "world" in the sense of the whole human race. It is needless to multiply texts; since one decisive example is as good as a hundred, and since I cannot expect any man who is not convinced by this text to be convinced by any other.

As an example of the class of Scriptures which "supply the means of their own limitation," my reviewer takes 1 John ii. 2; a passage concerning which, on a ground already specified, I have no controversy with him. I differ widely, however, from his conception of propitiation, which seems to me scripturally to denote an expiation for sin by which the sinner is *not* "actually and really covered, and protected from punishment," but only conditionally so—on

the condition, that is to say, of the concurrence of the sinner in the sacrifice offered. Does the reviewer think that the elect are "actually and really covered and protected" from the punishment of sin while they continue in unbelief?

As to the last sentence in the extract, in which the reviewer says, "Unless it can be proved that Christ has really 'ransomed,' 'saved,' 'drawn to him,' and 'taken away the sin of,' all that have ever lived, or ever will, the doctrine of universal redemption has no place in the Word of God"—I have nothing to do but to quote in opposition to it the declaration already considered: "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16).

The reviewer now proceeds to consider "in what Mr. Hinton's view of the universality of redemption consists." "Not, as he tells us, in actual, but in '*possible* salvation,' in a 'conditional hope,' by which all who hear the Gospel are placed in a new state of probation as to whether they will accept it or not. Here," exclaims the reviewer, "are free will and human ability without disguise." As to this last imputation, I hope all my doctrinal views have at all times been stated "without disguise;" and I believe it is well known that I have, both in the pulpit and by the press, for nearly half a century, maintained man's ability to do his duty. As to "free will," I know nothing about it. I believe in free agency; but "free will" is a term which I do not, and never could, understand.

"How Mr. Hinton," continues the reviewer, "maintaining such a sentiment [as man's ability to do his duty], can argue in another place that the glory of salvation is due to God alone, with any consistency, we know not." The mystery, however, is easily explained. Man, being able to do his duty, will not; and God makes him willing. It is thus that "the glory of salvation is due to God alone." If I had said that man was willing, instead of able, I should have ascribed the glory to the creature. To require a man to do what he is not able to do, seems to me to be a proceeding essentially and incurably unjust; and, if the occurrence of such a case be supposed, to give him ability is surely rather a matter of *justice* than of *grace*. The case in which *grace* is manifested is that in which a stubborn heart is exchanged for a willing one.

“Besides,” the reviewer goes on to say, “this ‘opportunity,’ or ‘possibility,’ of salvation is a delusion, even on Mr. Hinton’s own system; since, though men, according to his own view, *can* turn to God, he admits they never *will* until the special grace of the Holy Spirit overcomes their unwillingness, which makes their salvation as real an impossibility, apart from divine grace, on his principle as on ours. Where, then, is the alleged opportunity?”

Can it be necessary that I should demonstrate the fallacy of this argument? At the core of it lies this axiom; inability and unwillingness both constitute impossibility. Is this so? Let us test it by a few examples.

An accused party is under recognizances to appear at the assizes, and he does not come: why? Either because he has met with an accident, and cannot come; or because he has hidden himself, and will not come. In the first of these cases there is impossibility; is there so in the second?

A master gives an order to his servant, and it is not fulfilled: why? Either because the servant is ill, and cannot work; or because he is idle, and will not. In the first of these cases there is impossibility; is there so in the second?

A spendthrift is deeply in debt, and does not pay: why? Either because he has spent all, and cannot pay; or because, with property remaining, he secretes it, and will not. In the first of these cases there is impossibility; is there so in the second?

A profligate at a gin-shop is recommended to go home, and he does not: why? Either because he is dead drunk, and cannot; or because he is gambling, and will not. In the first of these cases there is impossibility; is there so in the second?

Cases of this sort might be multiplied without end, but it cannot be necessary that I should proceed further. Nor can there be any doubt as to the answer to the question which is founded on them. It is clear beyond dispute that unwillingness does not constitute impossibility, and that in this respect it differs essentially and widely from inability. But it may be replied, it leads to the same result. O, certainly it does—*that* never was questioned—but it does not lead to it through the same process; the one takes away the means of action, the other shows a disinclination to use them. The former of these only constitutes impossibility. To him who can do a thing but will not, it is not impossible.

If the general question be thus determined, the theological



ease will be easily disposed of. To a sinner who can come to Christ but will not, salvation is not impossible. To him opportunity of salvation really exists. It is in his own hands, as truly as "a price to get wisdom" is sometimes "in the hand of a fool" (Prov. xxvii. 16).

"In conclusion," my reviewer very charitably suggests that universal redemption is, not merely "a baseless theory,"—*that* is matter of opinion—but a theory "devised to conceal, or neutralize, the sovereignty" of God in the salvation of men. I beg leave respectfully to decline the honour thus intended me, of giving me a niche in the writer's gallery of crafty and wicked divines. I avow before God and man—and no *man* has a right to challenge my assertion—that I have devised no theory for this or any other sinister purpose, but have in simplicity sought for the truth as it is in Jesus. I hope and believe that my reviewer does the same, although I could easily say something equally severe of the "theory" of Hyper-Calvinism.

With the epitome of objections with which his article really concludes I must deal somewhat in detail.

"The theory of universal redemption," my reviewer says, "represents Christ as giving himself a ransom for those whom he never saves, for those whom he never favours even with the means of grace, and for those who were, even when he died for them, actually in perdition. It represents him as dying for those for whom he does not intercede, and so makes his death more extensive than his advocacy."

I may here remind the reviewer, in passing, that although some divines do hold the theory of universal redemption, I do not. I am no Arminian, as Arminians themselves very well know, and as all well-informed and candid Hyper-Calvinists will readily confess. I am a Calvinist, and I hold the doctrine of particular redemption, qualified by the opinion that redemption has in addition a universal aspect. I am not fairly chargeable, therefore, with consequences ensuing from the theory of universal redemption. As to the specific consequences charged upon my views in the passage now quoted, they are at least as clearly deducible from the 16th verse of the 3rd chapter of John's Gospel, and I may fairly leave the reviewer to argue with the Divine Author of that declaration.

"Upon this principle, too," he proceeds, "the drunkard and infidel may speak, without presumption, of their interest



in Christ." Assuredly, in common with the whole world, of their *conditional* interest in Christ—no more. And why not this?

"Nor has Satan," he continues, "any ground to fear any injury to his kingdom from the death of Christ, if those may and do perish for whom he died." No, not if *all* may and do perish for whom Christ died; but, if there be an elect multitude given by the Father to the Son, for whom, as their representative and surety, he laid down his life, and to whom he will assuredly give life eternal, then, I suppose, this consequence does not follow.

My reviewer goes on to say:—

"The universal doctrine places no certain saving efficacy in the blood of Christ at all. The saved in heaven owe no more to it than the lost in hell; they owe their salvation to something beside the atonement; they are not saved *by it*; since if it had saved *them*, it would equally have saved the lost in perdition, for whom, on the universal theory, it was equally offered."

This is an example of consequences charged upon me to which my views really are not liable. To "the universal doctrine," indeed, or to theoretical Arminianism, they may attach; but on my views they have no bearing at all. The sentence could have been written only in forgetfulness of my position that Christ died for the church in one sense, and the world in another.

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## CHAPTER III.

### ON THE PARTICULAR ASPECT OF REDEMPTION.

I HAVE now to deal with my reviewer in the *General Baptist Magazine*, who takes up the argument on behalf of theoretical Arminianism.

After an extended summary of my doctrinal system, the general accuracy of which I fully acknowledge, he thus commences the attack:—

"To all that is advanced in the fourth Lecture to establish the universal aspect of redemption, we give our cordial assent. The argument might, perhaps, have received further confirmation, but, as it

stands, it leads to a conclusion which cannot be easily disproved or evaded. This conclusion is, the will of God to bless with salvation all to whom the Gospel is addressed.

"But Mr. Hinton exhibits what he calls the Gospel under another and very different aspect. Whilst it is to all men a system of probation on terms of mercy, the most gracious end and purpose designed by it is to place them on a '*ground of conditional hope*;' and the issue is that it is rejected by all, without exception. The whole power of the probationary system is exhausted, the Spirit is not given in any mode or measure, and we cannot discover that it is the will of God that a single soul should be saved by it."

My reply to this is, that, from the argument in which the reviewer so cordially agrees, I have not drawn the conclusion which he ascribes to me; namely, that it is "the will of God to bless with salvation all to whom the Gospel is addressed." My conclusion is, that it is the will of God to bless all men with salvation upon condition of their believing in Christ.

It is nothing extraordinary that, from a probational system, "we cannot discover that it is the will of God that a single soul should be [certainly] saved." This, if at all, is to be learned from another source; and from a source which I have indicated with sufficient clearness, as will immediately appear.

His next thrust is the following:—

"The probationary system is succeeded, or supplemented, by another dispensation in favour of the elect, in which they are no longer probationers, but beneficiaries. This is the dispensation of the Spirit, by the bestowment of which the will of God is infallibly carried out, and consummated in their salvation.

"It is impossible to avoid this inference, viz., that, if the gift of the Spirit is an essential part of the Gospel dispensation, the impenitent cannot be guilty of rejecting it, since it was never offered to them: and, if not, the salvation of the elect is not conferred by the Gospel, but by something else."

"If the gift of the Spirit," says the reviewer, "is an essential part of the Gospel dispensation, the impenitent cannot be guilty of rejecting it, since it was never offered to them." I do not know how to understand this passage. What is it that "the impenitent cannot be guilty of rejecting"? The nearest antecedent is "the Gospel dispensation," and if I take this, I answer, that I never heard until now that the impenitent were charged with rejecting "the Gospel dispensation." The resurrection of the body and the final judgment are, as I understand them, parts of "the Gospel dispensation;" but the impenitent are not supposed to be

guilty of rejecting either of them. Impenitent sinners are charged with rejecting "the Gospel"—that is, the glad tidings of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ; but this is not the reviewer's point.

The more remote antecedent is "the gift of the Spirit," and the reviewer may mean to say that "the impenitent cannot be guilty of rejecting" this, which certainly "was never offered to them." This, of course, is quite true; but what is it to the purpose? Their sin and ruin is that they reject *the Gospel*.

His next position is laid down in the following terms:—

"We are told that redemption does not pertain in the same sense to all men; and that the proof of this is found in many restrictive phrases of Scripture, and in the actual differences in human experience. God gave his Son for the world, 'that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;' Christ gave himself for the church, 'that he might sanctify and cleanse it, . . . and present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.' We affirm that God has expressed his gracious design in the end and purpose of the Gospel in reference to the world, as strongly as he has expressed it in reference to the church."

If I understand this affirmation correctly, the writer means that God has expressed *the same* "gracious design in the end and purpose of the Gospel," in reference both to the world and the church. In proof of this position he first quotes John iii. 17: "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." It is clear, however, that this language does not express a purpose of actual salvation; it is, indeed, but a condensed form of that which had been fully stated in the preceding verse—"that whosoever believeth in him (his Son) should not perish, but have everlasting life." He next quotes 1 John v. 11: "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." I suppose, however, that eternal life through Christ is given to mankind only through faith in his name, or on condition of believing in him, which brings us to the same point as before.

The diversity of phraseology in the two classes of texts I have adverted to, is explained by the reviewer in the following manner:—

"If there be a difference in different texts, if what is expressed hypothetically when the condition is proposed is expressed positively when the condition is fulfilled, what is there in this to suggest a thought of limitation, or insincerity?"

I cannot tell why the reviewer has here introduced the word "insincerity." I know that this charge applies to the kind of Gospel preached by those who, holding a limited provision, address unlimited invitations; but it surely cannot apply to me, who hold a real universal provision on which universal invitations are most sincerely founded. As to the reviewer's mode of reducing the two classes of texts to a common import, I must frankly say I do not understand it. I have only to wish that he had illustrated his meaning by an example. If he admits that a *condition exists*, he admits all that I maintain.

The reviewer next handles the doctrine of election, and he handles it in the following manner:—

"The texts quoted in proof of the particularity of redemption may be quoted in proof of the doctrine of conditional election, as it is taught by Richard Watson and others. 'I lay down my life for the *sheep*.' 'Christ loved the *church*.' The sheep and the church are those whose faith was foreseen. It cannot be denied that foreseen faith had a place in the mind of Christ. 'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word' (John xvii. 20). In Ephes. i. 4, 5, who were 'chosen,' 'predestinated,' 'adopted?' ver. 1, the 'saints' at Ephesus, ver. 13, those who had 'believed.' 'Whom he did foreknow, he did predestinate.' If foreknowledge and predestination are identical, show us any other passages where the same tautology is found, as in some of those where this word occurs."

I certainly cannot acquiesce in the doctrine of "conditional election." "The sheep and the church," says the reviewer, "are those whose faith was foreseen." How can this be, when, if it had not been for their election and its consequences, not one of them would ever have believed? I have no inclination to regard foreknowledge and predestination as identical; but all that is necessary to predestination is a foreknowledge of persons, not of character. Undoubtedly, the chosen, as they become known in this world, are saints; but this supplies no answer to the question whether they were chosen because it was foreseen they would be saints, or for some other reason.

"Mr. Hinton," says the reviewer, "has noticed this reply. He has made no remarks upon the texts; his objection is that this doctrine allows to man the glory of his own salvation. But he has told us in so many words that man is able of himself to repent and turn to God; that these are acts of self-government which are competent to man. He would have us believe that a man may be saved by virtue of sovereign predestination, or he may be saved without it!



that he may be saved by the aid of the Holy Spirit, or he may be saved without it! Surely he must have forgotten the precept, 'Cast out the beam out of thine own eye.' 'Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it on a pole; and it came to pass, that, if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass he lived' (Numbers xxi. 9). 'Then saith he (Jesus) to the man, Stretch forth thine hand; and he stretched it forth, and it was restored whole like as the other' (Matt. xii. 13). In each of these cases there was a condition on which the cure was suspended. How much of merit was there in the fulfilment of the condition? Eating earns nothing, but it is a condition on which life depends. If, in the first case, there were Israelites who refused to look, and who died in their obstinacy, that fact would prove no merit in those who looked, and lived. And if, in the second, strength was given to enable the man to stretch out his withered hand, the case is exactly analogous to that of every man who comes to Christ. The prodigal *'arose and came to his father.'* He did not seem to be full of thoughts of his own deservings. 'Father, I have sinned,' 'I am no more worthy to be called thy son.' It is the duty of all men to believe. 'When ye have done all those things which are commanded of you, say, We are unprofitable servants.' At page 399, Mr. Hinton admits that faith does not avail for the justification of a sinner before God on account of any excellency in itself; and in this admission he gives the most conclusive reply to the objection we have been endeavouring to repel."

I have given this passage, though long, in its continuous form, because of the unity of the subject, and the attempted conclusiveness of the argument.

The writer first charges me with a palpable inconsistency. "He would have us believe," he exclaims in amazement, "that a man may be saved by virtue of sovereign predestination, or he may be saved without it! that he may be saved by the aid of the Holy Spirit, or he may be saved without it!" Undoubtedly I believe this, whether I can succeed in persuading anybody else to believe it, or not. And where is its astounding inconsistency? The reviewer has attempted no demonstration of it beyond the use of a couple of notes of admiration, which, I may respectfully suggest to him, prove nothing. If his sentence has the implied meaning that I thus give to man the glory of his own salvation, this clearly cannot be sustained, in the face of my repeated affirmation that, without the influence of the Holy Spirit, no man *will* believe in Jesus.

The reviewer then enters on an argument to show that the fulfilment by a sinner, without the aid of the Holy Spirit, of the condition on which salvation is suspended, implies no merit. I have never had an idea that it does so, and the



whole of this argument, consequently, passes me by. It would imply, however, the spontaneous production of a holy state of heart, out of which alone such a fulfilment of the condition could spring. This surely would be honourable to the sinner; it would be something good which he did not owe to God, and it would place him on a different ground from that occupied by those who were indebted for the same thing to the influence of the Holy Spirit, and to whom it could be emphatically said, "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" The explanation thus given is not in any degree inconsistent with my admission, that "faith does not avail for the justification of a sinner before God on account of any excellency in itself." How little the reviewer is satisfied, however, with his own position, appears from the passage which immediately follows:—

"If we are asked how it is that one man believes and is saved whilst another man persists in unbelief, we reply that it is taught by Christ himself, that, with the same advantages with which some are lost, others would be saved (Matt. xi. 23, 24; Luke x. 13, 14). This fact, without any explanation, is the proof that there may be actual differences in human experience under the same dispensation."

"There may be actual differences in human experience under the same dispensation." Of course there may; there evidently are so; who, indeed, ever doubted it? Or who, besides this reviewer, would have thought of adducing two passages of Scripture to prove it? "This fact," "that with the same advantages with which some are lost others would be saved," the reviewer is for taking "without any explanation;" will he undertake to say, however, that it is *without a cause*? And does he really not know what the cause is? not even with the help of John vi. 44: "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him"? But for the texts, or rather the text—for though the references are two the passage is but one, and the reviewer has left his readers to look for it—it is that in which our Lord contrasts Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom, with Capernaum, Bethsaida, and Chorazin, and tells us that the former, if they had been equally favoured with the latter, would have repented. Like the reviewer, I shall here abstain from discussion. The text, no doubt, has its difficulty; but in no way can it prove that a single sinner of mankind would come to Jesus "unless the Father draw him."

The next subject which engages the attention of the reviewer relates to the influence of the Holy Spirit, and the question whether its communication is not universal. Here he first endeavours to overthrow my position as to the ability of man:—

“Mr. Hinton has told us that man is able of himself to repent, and turn to God. In his ‘Theology,’\* he says, ‘Man is able to do all that God requires of him. He is able to take care of his eternal interests as of his temporal interests.’ We do not doubt that a tiger might be as innocent as a lamb. There is no want of power, it is only a want of disposition. The natural ability of a tiger to be harmless is as trustworthy as the natural ability of man to be his own saviour, either by perfect obedience or evangelical faith.”

This passage has some singular features. Not altogether undeserving of notice is the introduction of a phrase quite inappropriate to the argument, and wholly alien from my position in it. The writer chooses to speak of “the ability of man *to be his own saviour*.” He knows that this is phraseology I have never used, and should not choose to use; and what he means by thus, as it were, thrusting it upon me I cannot tell. If he means that my saying man has power to do all that God requires of him is tantamount to saying that man can be his own saviour, I may safely say that this is a controversial artifice as harmless as it is transparent. Nor have I ever spoken of the “trustworthiness” of man’s natural ability. I believe it as untrustworthy as my reviewer does; all I maintain is its existence in fact—does he admit this? When he speaks of “the natural ability of a tiger to be harmless,” he draws a comparison between the properties of rational and irrational creatures for which, I think, there is no just foundation.

“Mr. Hinton,” the reviewer proceeds, “in opposition to many divines, asserts that neither death nor moral corruption is to be regarded as having a penal character. They are elements of the probationary state. We believe he has a sermon from the text, ‘The wages of sin is death,’ to prove that death is not the penalty of Adam’s sin.”

In this passage there are two inaccuracies. In the first place, it can hardly be true that I have either published, or preached, such a sermon as he specifies, since I do not, and never did, hold the sentiment it was to prove. It is true

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\* Works, Vol. I., page 71.

that I have preached "from the text, 'The wages of sin is death;'" but very far indeed was my sermon from being intended "to prove that death is not the penalty of Adam's sin." But why, let me be permitted to ask, should the reviewer adduce as evidence in a grave and important argument so evanescent an element as a sermon not published by me, and, perhaps, not even heard by himself, when my sentiments on the point in question are in his hands in as plain and permanent a form as paper and print can assume? Reviewing of this kind is hardly adapted to inspire confidence in the reviewer, whether in his information or his discretion.

In the second place, I have never said "that neither death nor moral corruption is to be regarded as having a penal character." What I have said is that they have not now—that is, under the dispensation of mercy—a penal character. In more words, I think that death and moral corruption *were* penal in their origin, but that their character has been altered by their sovereign retention under, and incorporation into, the dispensation of mercy. I hardly see, however, what either of these things has to do with the controversy, unless it was intended to damage my character as a theologian with my Calvinistic brethren. They will see through the trick. The reviewer proceeds, however, to argument:—

"Whether the depravity of man be in its nature penal or not, its universality, and depth, and virulence, are acknowledged. From the awful responsibility of man, from the goodness of God, and the gracious character he claims for the Gospel dispensation, a probability arises that man would not be left without some influence to counteract his depravity."

I cannot see the ground of this alleged "probability." With all the riches of its grace, the Gospel dispensation is towards mankind at large a system of moral probation, under which there will necessarily be an equitable relation between ability and requirement; but I do not see why there should be more. This I affirm there is, when I say that "man is able to do all that God requires of him." If my reviewer will maintain that, clogged with his natural depravity, man is *not able* to do what God requires of him, I will on this supposition allow, not only the "probability," but the certainty—the necessity—of "some influence to counteract his depravity." If this cannot be maintained,

why, under a system of probation, should such an influence be vouchsafed?

My reviewer proceeds:—

“If it were admitted that man is totally unable of himself to attain to a character of perfect holiness, or that, having sinned, he is unable of himself to repent and turn to God, we are not convinced that the conclusion at page 378 is established. ‘The argument is this: men being unable to repent, the Spirit should be universally given. On the supposition stated the gift of the Spirit would be matter of equity, not of grace.’ Test this argument by giving it a different application. Men being unable to believe in Christ unless Christ had been given, the gift of Christ is a matter of equity, not of grace!”

Quite true, my sagacious friend, if *men had been required to believe in Christ without Christ having been given*. In that case, which is the real parallel, quite true.

Something of more weight follows in the succeeding passage, which I extract entire:—

“The antecedent probability of some divine influence is confirmed by the universal aspect of redemption, and the promises of the Gospel. This is, in part, admitted at page 383. If the premises had been permitted to speak their proper conclusion, it would have been that the gift of the Spirit is universal, like the gift of Christ. But, having drawn his parallel and laid down his premises, Mr. Hinton shrinks from the force of his own argument, and gives a false conclusion. ‘The distribution of the Spirit being a part of the dispensation of mercy, and this being wholly founded on the work of Christ, it follows, both that every part of the superstructure must have its bearing on the foundation, and that every part of the foundation must have its correspondence with the superstructure. As Christ died for all men, so *the Gospel is to be preached to all!* and as the Spirit is given to some only, so for some only, in some sense, must Christ have died.’ Having pronounced that one thing is universal, and another partial, it is no reflection on the logic of any man that he is unable to prove that the two are co-extensive. We claim this argument, and, confirmed as it is by one or two texts, we consider it decisive against the doctrine that the Spirit is given only for the elect. It has been admitted that the universal aspect of redemption is declared in such express terms that it would be difficult for any language to be more explicit—there must be a correspondence between the foundation and the superstructure; as the gift of Christ is, in some sense, for the world, so also must be the gift of the Spirit.—‘If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?’ ‘He that spared not his own Son, but *delivered him up for us all*, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?’”

My reviewer “claims this argument,” and thus puts it in his sense: “As the gift of Christ is in some sense for the world, so also must be the gift of the Spirit.” There is a



flaw, however, even in this seeming demonstration. My argument is not that, because the gift of Christ was *in some sense* for the church, so also must be the gift of the Spirit; but because the gift of Christ was for the church in a peculiar and special sense—in the sense, namely, of their being actually redeemed—therefore the Spirit must be given, without which such an issue could never be reached. The argument of the reviewer, a little more drawn out, is this: The gift of Christ is for all men in the sense of establishing an equitable gracious probation, to which the influence of the Spirit is not required; *therefore the Spirit must be given!* Will the reviewer forgive me for using a note of admiration here? I copied it involuntarily from a preceding passage of his review.

As for the texts produced, they only prove how kind our heavenly Father is to *his children*, and to those who believe on the name of his Son; it will cost some pains to show that they prove anything concerning unbelievers.

My reviewer now proceeds to another topic in the following terms:—

“Let us now suppose it to be proved that God gave his Son for the world, appointed him to the office of Mediator, and placed him in the position of substitute for all men—that this is the whole of redemption that belongs to all men—that the whole power of the probationary system is exhausted—the gift of the Spirit is withheld, and man is left to his own natural powers to understand, and accept, and apply, the Gospel. Then, we ask, what amount of adaptation is there in the truth exhibited to work that change of heart without which no man can see God? We are preferring no claim on the ground of justice. We are in a region of grace. If the truth alone is all that is given for the regeneration of man, surely it might have been hoped that it would be most gracious in its nature, and so unmistakable in its utterances that every man should know exactly what is his interest therein. Mr. Hinton tells us that obligation and duty are presented with all their force, and love speaks in tones so tender that, if man’s heart will yield to anything, it will be vanquished now. But he gives a fact which contradicts this theory. Man’s heart is not vanquished by the Gospel. The Gospel is rejected by all. The heart of man yields only to some grace far richer than the Gospel, to some other dispensation which is always and infallibly effectual. ‘As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth . . . so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it’ (Isaiah lv. 10, 11). If this Scripture is true, and Mr. Hinton’s assertion is true, what is the inference, but that the Gospel was not given to man with a purpose to save?”



If this is all that the reviewer desires to establish, "that the Gospel was not given to man with a purpose to save," I will grant it to him at once, and save him the trouble of argument. It can be no hardship for me to say again what I have said so often, that God instituted the dispensation of mercy "with a purpose" of subjecting mankind to an equitable probation, and of saving those who believe. I may add, however, that I do not see how the fact that "man's heart is not vanquished by the Gospel," contradicts the theory "that, if man's heart will yield to anything, it will be vanquished by it." All that this painful and humbling fact proves, so far as I can see, is that the enmity of man's heart towards God is so intense that, in the way of motive, it will yield to nothing.

My reviewer continues:—

"The Gospel is presented as the manifestation of God's love to the world, and for the salvation of the world. Does Mr. Hinton's theology sustain this claim, or contradict it? According to him, the ultimate purpose of God in the Gospel is to place men on a ground of conditional hope. But love is shown in the desire to save. 'In this was manifested the love of God to us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world *that we might live through him*' (1 John iv. 9). There is a meaning here far beyond that of placing man on a ground of conditional hope, and willingly leaving him to perish there. The miser in James ii. 16 placed his brother on a ground of conditional hope, without any disposition to satisfy his hope. Is the love of God like his? Let Mr. Hinton answer. 'Christ gave himself for the church that he might sanctify, and cleanse, and save it;—God gave his Son for the world, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life.' The difference, therefore, lies, not in the substance of the gift, but in the design with which it is bestowed, and the benefits which were to accrue from it. The design towards the church was salvation; the design towards the world was something different. May we venture to ask what it was, and what were the benefits to accrue from it? It could not be salvation; if so, where is the difference? If Mr. Hinton had meant that what was designed in one case positively was designed in the other case conditionally, he knows enough of the use of language to have told us so. Is this mode of presenting the Gospel (if indeed it is not false to call it the Gospel) adapted to subdue the enmity of man's heart, or is it hiding the Saviour from the sinner?"

I demur to the first sentence in this extract. It is here laid down as an axiom, that "the Gospel is presented to man as the manifestation of God's love to the world, and *for the salvation of the world.*" "For the salvation of the world." Query—actual salvation? or conditional salvation? The

former I deny, and, if the reviewer affirms it, I challenge him to the proof. The latter I affirm; but by this the reviewer makes no point. In his quotation of 1 John iv. 9, he marks with italics the phrase "*that we might live through him,*" and adds, "There is a meaning here far beyond that of placing a man on a ground of conditional hope, and willingly leaving him to perish there." What, then, is this meaning? I can understand by the phrase nothing beyond the Gospel terms: "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned."

The reviewer seems to intend to afford an illustration of the subject when he says, "the miser in James ii. 16 placed his brother on a ground of conditional hope." What, then, did the miser do to his brother? He said, "Depart in peace; be ye warmed, and be ye filled;" but he gave him nothing. And this the reviewer calls placing him "on a ground of conditional hope"! I may fairly ask, what *was* the condition? and what was the benefit to be obtained by fulfilling it? The fact is, that the miser, instead of placing his brother on a ground of conditional hope, gave him a real, but hypocritical, refusal. The bringing forward of such an illustration shows that the reviewer has no just conception of a state of conditional hope, and that he is arguing in the dark. In the following passage, however, he insinuates that the love which I ascribe to God is like the miser's, a love of words and not of deeds! How can this be, when I affirm that "God so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"?

I am sorry to have written so obscurely as to leave the reviewer in any reasonable doubt as to my views of the design of the Gospel dispensation towards the church and the world respectively, but I do not pretend to know *much* "of the use of language;" my meaning, however, is, that the design of the Gospel dispensation is, towards the church, salvation—towards the world, probation; or, to adopt the reviewer's suggested phraseology, towards the church positive salvation—towards the world conditional salvation. When the reviewer asks whether "this mode of presenting the Gospel is adapted to subdue the enmity of man's heart," I answer, Yes; I think it is. It should be added, however, that this is not the question. The question is, Is this a

scriptural representation of the attitude of God towards man?

My reviewer now approaches the subject of reprobation, and makes a strenuous attempt to fix this sentiment upon me. These are his words :—

“Let us make another effort to ascertain what is the value of this conditional hope, since it is all that is offered for the deliverance and salvation of a world lying in wickedness, and passing to endless perdition. Mr. Hinton does not teach reprobation. He protests against the charge. He teaches that redemption is co-extensive with guilt and ruin—that the Lamb of God taketh away the sin of the world—that the grace of God bringeth salvation to all men. But he tells us (p. 387), that if all men were saved, it might be said that the moral government of God was wanting in a principle of genuine equity, and that consequently a portion of mankind are left for justice to take its course. If this is true, if the perdition of any man be necessary in this sense for the vindication of the justice of God, we fear that man cannot be far from a state of reprobation; the conditional hope can be worth but very little to him. We have heard before of a portion of mankind on whom grace richer than the Gospel is bestowed; we are told here of another portion of our race who, by the sovereign will of God, are passed by and left to dishonour and wrath for their sins, to the praise of his glorious justice. This is not lifting up the Son of man to draw all men unto him. It is taking away the foundation of a sinner's faith. What warrant can any man have to trust in Christ for salvation, before he knows whether the perdition of his soul is necessary for the manifestation of divine justice, or whether it is not?”

The charge here brought against me—that is, against the views I advocate—is of the gravest character. I am “taking away the foundation of a sinner's faith.” Many thanks to the Christian brother who has the faithfulness to tell me so, and a candid examination for the reasons by which his allegation is sustained.

I am aware how favourite a mode of warfare it is with Arminians against Calvinism to charge it with, either openly or implicitly, teaching reprobation; and I must confess I have not been without a hope that the Calvinistic scheme, as I hold it, was clear from such an imputation. The mischief, however, according to my reviewer, still lurks in the system, in however mitigated a form. Mr. Hinton “tells us,” he says, “in p. 387, that, if all men were saved, it might be said that the moral government of God was wanting in a principle of genuine equity, and that, consequently, a portion of mankind are left for justice to take its course.”

Now, upon referring to my "Lectures on Redemption," I find, not only that I have not said this in the letter, but that this is manifestly not the meaning of what I have said. What I have said is, that such an imputation might be cast on the moral government of God—not "if all men were saved"—but "if the universal rejection of his redeeming mercy had been remedied by the universal gift of the Holy Spirit." This is surely a widely different thing. That God himself did not fear an imputation on his moral government "if all men were saved," must be manifest from this, that he made an actual provision for the salvation of all men, and gave them a most winning welcome to it. If by accepting his invitation all men had been saved, it would doubtless have been to his untarnished glory; it is possible, however, that it might not have been so, when his mercy had been universally rejected, to have saved all men by the further vouchsafement of his Holy Spirit, which is all that I have asserted. The premises being thus faulty, the inference drawn from them cannot but be vitiated.

The reviewer repeats his misrepresentation in a form of still grosser inaccuracy, when he says, "we are told here of another portion of our race who, by the sovereign will of God, are passed by, and left to dishonour and wrath for their sins, to the praise of his glorious justice." I must be allowed to say that, by me, neither the reviewer nor anybody else has been told anything of the kind. That I have repeatedly said the contrary the reviewer knows very well; and my statement that with a universal provision of mercy God has combined a limited communication of his Holy Spirit, is not fairly rendered into this, that a certain portion of our race he has "passed by, and left to dishonour and wrath for their sins." It is a strange method of passing men by, and leaving them to dishonour and wrath for their sins, so to love them as to give for them his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

When the reviewer closes his argument by the question, "What warrant can any man have to trust in Christ for salvation, before he knows whether the perdition of his soul is necessary for the manifestation of divine justice?" I have only to answer, that the system I advocate knows nothing of such a necessity. For every man salvation is provided, and to it every man is welcome.



From the topic of reprobation the reviewer turns to three scriptural arguments of a general character :—

“The predestination of a portion of mankind to eternal life, and the exception of the rest, appears to be inconsistent with the assurance that God sent his Son into the world that the world through him might be saved ; the withholding of the gift of the Holy Spirit from any for whom Christ died appears to be inconsistent with the promise that, having given his Son, God would with him also freely give us all things ; the exception of millions from the love which secures salvation appears to be inconsistent with the will of our Saviour that all men should be saved.”

The first of these arguments is founded on John iii. 17—the declaration that “God sent his Son into the world that the world through him might be saved ;” with which, it is alleged, “the predestination of a portion of mankind to eternal life, and the exception of the rest, appears to be inconsistent.” Now I object here to the mode of stating the fact. The divine “predestination of a portion of mankind to eternal life” I hold, but I learn nothing from Scripture of “the exception of the rest ;” and I have nothing to do with any difficulty which it may be supposed to involve. I observe, further, that the declaration cited teaches no more than that there was made, through Christ, a provision for the salvation of all men by faith ; a provision with which “the predestination of a portion of mankind to eternal life” appears to me to be not at all inconsistent.

The second argument is founded on Romans viii. 32 : “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ?” with which “promise”—which, however, is not a promise, but merely an inference from a premised fact—it is alleged to be inconsistent that God should “withhold the gift of his Spirit from any for whom Christ died.” The reply to this is, that the passage in which this text occurs does not permit the pronoun “us” to be taken in a universal sense. Without an actual reference to it, many of my readers will recollect that Romans viii. from ver. 31 to the end, consists of a burst of triumphant joy on account of the glorious privileges of believers in Christ, and a single verse cannot be severed from the general reference. God will give all good things to believers in Jesus, there is no doubt ; and the passage teaches no more.

The third argument is founded on the alleged “will of our



Saviour that all men should be saved;" with which will "the exception of millions from the love which secures salvation" is said to be inconsistent. Now I have yet to learn that it is "the will of our Saviour that all men should be saved." The reviewer refers, of course, to 1 Tim. ii. 4, where nearly the words he has used are certainly to be found, but not, I think, in the sense in which he has used them. The connexion clearly determines a different meaning. The apostle is giving directions to the churches to pray "for all men," including expressly "kings, and all that are in authority;" which, he says, "is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." Here three observations may be made. 1. The force of the phrase "all men" may be limited by the scope of the exhortation. Paul is saying, Pray for men of all classes, because the Gospel contemplates men of all classes. 2. Or the assertion that Christ "will have all men to be saved" may mean that Christ will have salvation proclaimed to all; according to the remaining clause of the verse—"and come to the knowledge of the truth." 3. At any rate it cannot be the will of Christ that "all men" should be actually saved, or saved otherwise than by faith—that is, conditionally. Now, not with either of these explanations is "exception from the love which secures salvation" in any degree inconsistent.

In the next paragraph the reviewer introduces an argument of a different kind:—

"If the atonement be infinitely sufficient, and predestination sovereign, and grace irresistible, Mr. Hinton has not shown why God could not as righteously pardon all as he can pardon one; why he could not sanctify and save the world as well as the church. He has not shown what there is to prevent the salvation of all men but a want of benevolence in God. There can be no obstacle on the part of God as a governor; every obstacle is removed by the atonement. There can be no obstacle in man; man does not receive salvation as a probationer; election has no respect to anything in man. It is for want of love in the Father's heart that those whom he has redeemed with the blood of his Son are suffered to perish in their sins. The joy of the father on the return of the prodigal condemns every system which involves a conclusion like this. The question remains without an answer, and the assertion that God is infinitely willing to forgive is without practical proof. We have already referred to the allegation at page 387, that some are left to perish lest a slur should be cast upon the divine government. We cannot accept this as a reply. We reject it, as we reject purgatory and the mass, and for the same

reason. Like them, it is derogatory to the 'One sacrifice offered for sins for ever.'"

According to the mode of argument here pursued, it does not appear that any "practical proof" "that God is infinitely willing to forgive," short of the actual salvation of the whole human race, would be satisfactory to the reviewer. If the Son of the Father has died for the whole world, the stubborn fact remains, in spite of all that can be said to the contrary, that some of "those whom he has redeemed by the blood of his Son are suffered to perish in their sins;" and the reviewer may proceed to shut himself (*not me*) up to the conclusion that this "is for want of love in the Father's heart," as soon as he pleases. I protest, however, against the use he makes of the parable of the prodigal son, which he evidently handles as though our Lord had intended it as an illustration of redeeming mercy, which I must broadly maintain it is not. The scope of all the three parables in the 15th of Luke is purely local and Jewish, as determined by the occasion of them stated in ver. 1, 2.

To the reviewer's main objection that my system infers "a want of benevolence in God," since he might save all men and does not, I shall not content myself, as I might, with saying to an Arminian, Thou art in the same condemnation; I reply, generally, that benevolence is not the only divine attribute exercised in the work of human redemption. It is exercised, undoubtedly, and gloriously exercised; but it is exercised in unison with other attributes, and not exclusively. In one view God's benevolence is associated with his equity, and he is pleased to establish over mankind a system of gracious but equitable probation, founded upon the gift and sacrifice of his Son. Under this system, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned;" the perdition of an unbeliever implying no "want of benevolence in God," but being the natural result of a system in which benevolence has its operation modified by equity. The reviewer, I hope, will not now say that "the question" he has raised "remains without an answer;" and, perhaps, the answer here given may not be, like another to which he refers, but which I have not given, as distasteful to him as "purgatory and the mass."

It may fairly be observed, however, that I am not the only party in this controversy concerned with the question why

God has not saved all men. Upon the reviewer's theory as well as upon mine the fact is the same, that God has not saved all men; and I am as much entitled to ask the reviewer why God has not, as he me. If he maintains that God has both given his Son to die for all men and given his Spirit to all men, then why has he not saved all men? It must still be from "a want of benevolence in God" that he has not made the influence of his Spirit effectual to the salvation of all, as, of course, he might have done. Or, if not from a deficiency of love, nothing remains but to acknowledge a deficiency of power. God has tried to save all men, and could not. Will the reviewer accept this conclusion?

The reviewer winds up his paper by making a quotation from me:—

"We cannot give Mr. Hinton's estimate of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God better than by quoting his own words. We beg those who have the opportunity to turn to page 412, and read for themselves. With a prospect of universal rejection, 'Was the ministry of reconciliation worthy of God? Viewed simply in relation to the happiness of mankind, it may be said without hesitation that it was not so, since the happiness of mankind is in no degree promoted by it. In this respect it must sadly be pronounced a failure, and a waste; and, indeed, worse than this, since the Gospel ministry, neglected and despised, becomes an occasion of fresh guilt, and more aggravated condemnation.'"

This is as much as to say, "Out of thine own mouth will I condemn thee;" but I have yet a demurrer to put in before judgment is passed. This quotation is given as "Mr. Hinton's estimate of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God." Now, injustice is thus done me in two respects. First, it is not of "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God" that this is my estimate, but of "the ministry of reconciliation;" or, as the connexion shows, of the universal preaching of the Gospel. The other phrase, "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God," is used by the apostle in 1 Tim. i. 11, and by the reviewer in this place, to denote a far wider object, namely, the entire work of redemption.

Secondly, even of "the ministry of reconciliation" this is not "Mr. Hinton's estimate," but only a part of it; and as the reviewer has done me injustice by quoting a part, my readers must allow me to do myself a small measure of justice by quoting the whole. From the point where he stops, I proceed thus: "This, however, is taking too narrow

a view of the subject. From a truer and more elevated stand-point, 'the ministry of reconciliation' will assume a different character. Neither the whole nor the highest end of God in his ways is the well-being of creatures, but the manifestation of his own glory. Now the glory of God is manifested in 'the ministry of reconciliation' in two ways. On the one hand it is a display of infinite grace and condescending mercy, the honour of which remains to him although the acceptance of it is spurned by mankind. On the other hand it is, as I have shown, an enlarged development of his moral government. Thus, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear, God will be glorified, both by a direct display of his character and by a noble expansion of his moral administration." I have now only to second my reviewer's request, that those who have the opportunity will "turn to 'Redemption,' p. 412, and read for themselves."

In the concluding sentence of the review, I have the pleasure of expressing a perfect agreement:—

"Under the old typical dispensation the city of refuge was open to all, and the way was to be unmistakable and unobstructed. What did it mean but this? Keep the road to the cross clear! Let every man know there is salvation for him there!"

Oh! if I thought that the views I hold cast any obstructions into, or shed any obscurity over, "the way to the cross," how gladly, how eagerly, would I modify them! Yes; this is right. "Keep the road to the cross clear! Let every man know there is salvation for him there!"

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## CONCLUSION.

How well I recollect that, after the publication of my volume on the "Work of the Holy Spirit," the late Rev. Joseph Ivimey, in the Committee-room of the Baptist Missionary Society, where the book was the subject of some passing remarks, said, in his characteristic manner, "That book ought to be answered, sir." And I may now, perhaps, confess without shame, that it has sometimes been to me an occasion of feeling—I will not open my heart to the public

gaze so far as to say what kind of feeling—that, during thirty years, and these by no means wanting either in philosophical or theological activity, it never has been answered. That I should have rejoined to an answer if one had been vouchsafed to me, is highly probable; but, perhaps, I am better situated now for such a rejoinder than I could have been if my views had been met in the usual way. Then I should most likely have been answered from one side—probably the Hyper-Calvinistic; now I am answered from both sides, the Hyper-Calvinistic and the Arminian: and in this manner my views are subjected to an examination more thorough and searching than any they could otherwise have received.

It is a source of satisfaction to me, also, that, though the papers I have been examining are but reviews, and reviews not of great length, nor of first-class periodicals, they are argumentative reviews, and reviews by writers not unworthy of their task. It is to be supposed that the critical staff of the respective denominations includes their most considerable theologians, and their best writers; and I may not be far wrong in conjecturing that the two schools of divinity to which I am opposed have now put forth their strength. I have endeavoured fairly to meet it, and the class of readers who are interested in this department of theological controversy will judge of the result.

I say “the class of readers;” for I am aware that such readers form but a class. I am far indeed from expecting that these few pages, if ever they should see the light, will engage any general interest. Books of fiction and of travel will undoubtedly be much more to the public taste, and, even in theology, the discussion of such points as are here treated may be deemed out of date—an anachronism; a class of readers will, nevertheless, be found for them, especially, perhaps, among those of my brethren in the ministry, and their more intelligent hearers, who have given attention to my former writings, and who may, not without interest, possibly not without profit, observe in what mode the positions I have taken have been assailed and defended.

I write for these; not for my critics, as they, doubtless, have not written for me, but for their respective partisans. On neither side, I dare say, have we any thought of convincing one another; but outside of the immediate sphere



of the controversy are many whose habits of thought are less fixed, who are less influenced by prejudgments, who are less tenaciously held by party ties, and so are more apt to independent thought and more open to conviction than ourselves. For these I have written; and to their prayerful attention and the blessing of God what I have written is commended.

It should be observed, however, that what I have here written can be of no interest to any person but one who has read attentively at least my "Lectures on Redemption," of which the papers I have been examining profess to be a review; while the interest of such a reader will naturally be augmented in proportion to his acquaintance with my other writings, from "Theology" downwards. It will be desirable that the reader should have my "Lectures on Redemption" by him, and make frequent reference to them, in order that he may see whether justice is done to me by my reviewers, and whether they have really brought out the strength of my argument. There is, of course, much in a book which cannot be noticed in detail in a review, and it is hardly to be expected of an opponent to exhibit the whole force of the case he opposes; it will, consequently, be advantageous to the reader if he will make the perusal of these pages only a pendant to the study of the "Lectures" themselves.

If it were at all proper for me to say what I think my reviewers have effected in relation, either to the views I have advocated or to myself as their humble but willing advocate, I should say, with high respect for their talents, that they have not moved me a hair's breadth from any of the positions I had previously occupied, or shaken my profound conviction that Moderate Calvinism is, as Robert Robinson called it, "the safe path between two extremes."

## A REVIEW OF THE BISHOP OF LONDON'S "THREE SERMONS ON THE CHURCH."

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THE discourses now subjected to review were delivered in the parish church of Saint James, Westminster, during Lent, 1842. The publication of them is, of course, designed to challenge regard to their contents; and, for several reasons, they deserve the regard they challenge.

In the first place, the subject on which they treat is of great interest and importance. They are stated to be "Sermons on THE CHURCH;" that is to say, on the supposed relation a body so denominated bears to the spiritual condition and prospects of mankind. No topics can be more important than those which affect the satisfactory adjustment of our religious concerns. If The Church, as the bishop of London inculcates, is the necessary medium of our salvation, the doctrine relating to it stands in the very first rank of truths. It is of no less moment than those which set forth the nature of repentance and faith, or than even those which assert the personal dignity, and the vicarious atonement, of the Son of God. Besides its essential moment, the subject of these discourses gathers an accidental importance from the times: not only because it is disputed, but because the discussions to which it has given rise have deeply stirred the minds of men, and are destined to do so still more profoundly. The question forms one part of that great ecclesiastical controversy which may be emphatically said to constitute the business of the age, and which must be pursued to its consummation, whatever else may remain undone.

The discourses before us are the more worthy of notice, because they propound the writer's doctrine concerning The Church in a compact and popular manner. Without being in all respects eminent for perspicuity, the bishop of London is on his main point abundantly plain. His view of The Church is not wrapped up in folds of mystery, or expressed

in a technical jargon, intelligible only in the schools. He has evidently both preached and written for the people, and we are called upon, not only to thank him for having so plainly said what he means, but also to give corresponding attention to his instructions.

In fine, the sermons under review deserve grave attention, because they are the production of a distinguished Anglican prelate, whose station and character will undoubtedly give to his sentiments great weight and extensive currency. It is the more important, therefore, that they should be subjected to examination, in order that, if they should be found erroneous, a corrective may in some sort be attempted.

In proceeding to the investigation I design, I have to clear my way by observing, that on a large portion of the discourses I have no remarks to offer. The second of them, for example, is devoted to the proof that episcopal government is an essential feature of the true church; a sentiment which, although I do not hold it, I am not now about to call in question. Nor shall I have occasion to advert at length to the argument of the third discourse, or the numerous quotations from the writings of other Anglican bishops by which it is principally occupied. My intention is to examine the doctrine respecting The Church which is here set forth; and, with this view, I shall notice such parts of the sermons only as have relation to it.

Before I proceed, I do justice with much pleasure to the bland and benignant manner in which the distinguished author has treated the "unhappy subject" (as bishop Sherlock has it) of his discourses. I shall endeavour to imitate him. Without quoting his words, I unite with him in prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God, that not only we who have written upon it, but all who read what we have written, may come "to a right conclusion on this important matter."

As I have said that my design is to examine the bishop's doctrine concerning The Church, it is, of course, proper that I should exhibit in his own words its precise tenor. The text of the first sermon is Acts ii. 47—"The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved:" and the views of the bishop will be readily gathered from the following extracts:—

"It is an unavoidable inference from the words of the text, that

those who *are to be saved* must be *added to the church*: in other words, that incorporation into the church of Christ is necessary to salvation" (p. 5).

"In the sentence which I have chosen for my text, it is manifest that the word church is to be taken in the largest sense, as denoting the general assembly of the faithful called out of an unbelieving world, and forming one mystical body, members one of another, Jesus Christ himself being the head. 'For as the body,' says St. Paul to the Corinthians, 'is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.' This united society of believers constitutes the household of God, a distinct family, and a peculiar commonwealth; as St. Paul describes the Ephesian Christians: 'Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.' To this mystical body each individual sinner, who is 'elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ,' is added; united thereto by baptism; 'which,' says St. Peter, 'doth also now save us, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.' A new principle of life is infused into him; he is regenerate; born anew of water and of the Spirit; and placed in a new relation to God, as one of his own peculiar family and household; furnished with all the means of realizing to himself the promise of salvation given by Jesus (Christ to all penitent sinners, and sealed to *him* personally in baptism" (pp. 7, 8).

"Salvation through Jesus Christ was the doctrine which the apostles were commissioned to proclaim to all the people of the earth: 'Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.' Those who were so baptized were made members of the church of Christ, and placed in a state capable of salvation. It was God's purpose to save them through Christ, and this was the first step in the process. The sacred historian therefore says, 'The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.' It did not follow as a certain consequence, that all who were so added to the visible body of Christ would be finally saved by him from the wrath to come; but it would be their own fault if they were not; for by their incorporation into the church they were enabled to do that which, without such incorporation, would have been impracticable, to work out their own salvation, though with fear and trembling" (pp. 1, 2).

"But I revert to the conclusion to be drawn from the words of the text, that, if 'the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved,' those who are to be saved must be added to the church; and that, therefore, the church is the appointed medium, or instrumental

means, in and through which individual sinners must appropriate to themselves the pardon which Christ has purchased for all; first being admitted by baptism into the church, and so acquiring a title to its privileges, and grace to use them; and afterwards being nourished with the food of sound doctrine, and of the Sacrament of the body and blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who was given, as our church declares, 'not only to die for us, but also to be our spiritual food and sustenance in that holy Sacrament'" (p. 10).

"From the view which we have now taken of the subject, the following conclusions may seem to be established. First, that the church is a spiritual society, the foundations of which were laid by Jesus Christ himself, its divine and perpetual head; its frame and constitution being afterwards constructed and settled by his apostles, acting with his authority, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. Secondly, that its office is to bring sinners to Christ, by furnishing to those who are incorporated into it the means of knowledge and holiness; and that it is, therefore, not merely *instrumental*, as a teacher, but *sacramental*, as a medium of the believer's personal union with his Saviour, conveying and dispensing grace. Thirdly, that it consists of all those who, having been admitted into it by baptism, hold the faith as it is in Jesus, and who use, or do not obstinately refuse, their spiritual privileges; and that all local churches, which can trace their apostolical descent, and teach the pure word, and duly administer the ordinances of Christ, are branches, more or less flourishing, more or less profitable, of the one Holy Universal Church" (pp. 15, 16).

## I.

The reader will not fail to observe, that the bishop has founded his doctrine concerning The Church on the words of his text; from which, he says "it is an unavoidable inference that those who *are to be saved* must be *added to the church*" (p. 5). It will be proper in the first instance, therefore, to inquire how far the passage on which he relies will sustain this inference.

It appears to me that the bishop has failed in the interpretation of his text, and that he has mistaken the meaning of it in two essential particulars.

1. He tells us that the word church is here to be taken "as denoting the general assembly of the faithful called out of an unbelieving world" (p. 7). I submit, however, that the word is here to be understood of that particular company of professed believers in Christ then recently constituted at Jerusalem. It was to that company in point of fact that the parties were added, and the bishop has shown no reason for denominating them "the general assembly of the faithful." Nor does any such reason appear. On the contrary,



this very body is subsequently called "the church at Jerusalem" (Acts viii. 1); and it evidently bore no other relation to any "general assembly of the faithful" than did the churches at Ephesus, Corinth, or Philippi.

2. In his interpretation of the last clause of his text—"such as should be saved"—the bishop is not more happy. He understands this phrase to mean "those who were to be saved" (p. 5). To say nothing of this mutation of the English authorized version, that version itself is in this instance objectionable. The bishop of London is far too good a scholar not to know that *σωζομένους* (the *present* participle) is grammatically incapable of such a rendering. Bloomfield, after many critics, justly rejects it. A literal translation would be, "The Lord added to the church daily *the saved*." Without inquiring for the moment what the sense of the term may be, it must be evident that it cannot have the meaning assigned to it by the bishop. The true meaning, however, is by no means difficult of discovery. It is obvious, of course, that believers in Christ are not there-upon "saved," in the full import of that word; this felicity remains to be consummated in heaven. They, however, do, upon believing in him, acquire an actual interest in salvation; that is to say, the possession of some of its blessings, and a title to the rest. "Being justified by faith," says the apostle, "we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have access into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. v. 1, 2). In this limited sense believers in Christ may be said to be already saved; and this mode of speaking of them is so frequent in the Scriptures as to render examples of its use superfluous here. When, therefore, the inspired narrator says in the passage before us, that "the Lord added to the church daily the saved," he clearly means the converted—those who, by faith in Christ (on the profession of which they had been baptized), had acquired an interest in salvation.

If this be the just interpretation of the text, it fails entirely to support the doctrine which the bishop builds upon it. Neither to the body he means to designate as The Church, nor to the parties he contemplates as needing to be saved, has the writer the remotest reference. The fact he states is simply this—that the Lord added daily to the

church at Jerusalem converted men. The conclusion to be drawn from this statement is of an entirely opposite character to that deduced by the bishop; and, in so far as his doctrine rests on this text, it may be declared to be, not only unsupported, but overthrown.

So much for the "unavoidable inference." Let us now proceed to an examination of the general views which the bishop maintains on the subject before us.

## II.

I begin by some observations on the idea which the bishop attaches to his principal term, The Church. In his argument (and necessarily, for his purpose) this term is used as denoting "the whole body of the faithful in all parts of the world" (p. 6); or more fully, "the general assembly of the faithful called out of an unbelieving world, and forming one mystical body, members one of another, Jesus Christ himself being the head" (p. 7). These he takes to constitute "the household of God," and elsewhere denominates "Christ's Holy Catholic Church" (p. 15).

The bishop claims scriptural authority for this. Of the word *ἐκκλησία* [church] he says, that "as applied to Christians, it denotes a company of persons believing in Jesus Christ; sometimes the whole body of the faithful in all parts of the world, sometimes those who inhabit a particular country or city" (p. 6). And confining himself to these two uses of the term, he says that, in understanding it of the former, he takes it "in the largest sense." There is a yet larger sense, however, in which the sacred Scriptures use the term in question. We find it to denote the entire multitude of the redeemed, whether in heaven, or on earth, or yet unborn. This must be the meaning, for example, when it is said, "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. v. 25); since it is evidently of all the redeemed that what follows is true, and since it can be true of none besides. Acts xx. 28\* is another instance. It requires to be con-

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\* "Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." This is a direction to the elders of the church at Ephesus; but the import of the term church cannot be confined to the Christian society in that city, because the text would in this case prove the church at Ephesus exclusively to be "*the church of God.*" The apostle must be

sidered, therefore, whether the multitude of the redeemed does not challenge the name of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, in preference to the whole body of the faithful at any one time upon earth.

Before proceeding with this inquiry, let me be permitted to remove the obscurity—perhaps the mystery—which, in many minds, attaches itself to the term catholic. I wish the reader to understand that *catholic* is merely an Anglicized Greek word, and that, in plain English, it means *universal*. *Catholic church*, therefore, is but a synonym for *universal church*, and the one phrase may always be exchanged for the other. I shall employ chiefly the latter.

Now the Universal Church is, of course, the whole church, and contains of necessity every member of it—otherwise it is not universal. But the whole church of Christ is not, and never has been, at any one moment upon earth. Part of it is already in heaven, and part of it has not as yet come into being. The phrase The Universal Church, therefore, cannot, without manifest inaccuracy, be applied to an aggregate body in this world, however composed. Multitudes belong to that church whom such a use of the expression would exclude. In this case, indeed, the Universal Church would be a body of ever-shifting elements, as the various members of the church on earth might enter and depart; not for a single day consisting of the same persons, and at distant periods made up of persons altogether different.

The bishop's use of the appellation, The Universal Church, could not be justified, therefore, if it were really "the whole body of *the faithful* in all parts of the world" to whom he intended to apply it. In his view, however, Christ's Holy Catholic Church consists, not of all the believers in the world, but of all persons associated in certain Christian communities—in those, namely, which exhibit what he deems the necessary features of the true church.

To this I further object, that, to regard these, or any other Christian societies on earth, as constituting The Universal Church, would include within that body many whom it cannot really contain.

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understood to speak of the whole body which Christ "hath purchased with his own blood," that is to say, of the entire multitude of the redeemed; and to enjoin the Ephesian elders to "feed" such part of it as might come under their care.

The bishop tells us that the term church, "as applied to Christians" in the Scripture, "denotes a company of persons *believing* in Jesus Christ;" but he would have been more correct if he had said, a company of persons *professing to believe* in him. All churches of Christ were, and are, necessarily companies of professors, and the whole of them can constitute nothing but a larger body of the same class. The Universal Church, therefore, if constituted of any Christian societies on earth, must consist of similar materials. The bishop, indeed, speaks of it as a "united society of *believers*," "the general assembly of *the faithful*," and "the congregation of *Christian people*;" forgetting, it would seem, how far the multitude of Christian *professors* are from being either the one or the other. If Christian societies had been in all cases formed on the strictest interpretation of Christ's will, they could not have been accurately designated "the faithful;" inasmuch as admission into them can turn upon nothing more decisive than a profession of faith in him, without any absolute guarantee for its sincerity. The existence of false professors was, indeed, distinctly foreseen, and a corresponding discipline provided. But, after the manner in which communities called Christian have been actually formed, to talk of them as constituting an assembly of "*the faithful*" is utterly preposterous. With the largest admissions as to the probable number of pious individuals, it will not be contested, when the state of Christendom is taken into account, that what the bishop means by The Church consists to a very large extent of persons utterly irreligious, and even profligate. Can it be held that *these* constitute the "mystical body of Christ;" that he is *their* vital Head; and that *they* are "fellow-citizens with the saints, of the household of God, and builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit"? Who, then, are the lost?

Another objection to applying the epithet The Universal Church to any society, or combination of societies, on earth, arises from the fact that all such societies are constituted by merely ritual acts of union; according to the bishop, for example, by baptism. Now it is an explicit and solemn declaration of the apostle (Gal. v. 6), that, "in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but faith, which worketh by love." The indisputable meaning of this passage is, that, in relation to salvation and all



its blessings, ritual actions have no influence whatever—neither if we perform them are we the better, nor if we do not perform them are we the worse; but that the only influential element in this respect is the exercise of “faith, which worketh by love.” To affirm, then, that there exists on earth a body (however constituted) of professing Christians, incorporation with which is necessary to salvation, is to contradict the Scriptures. Yet this is by implication affirmed, when it is maintained that any body of professing Christians on earth constitutes The Universal Church.

These reasons appear to me conclusive against denominating any Christian societies on earth Christ’s Holy Universal Church. I may now add, that no reason whatever exists why this name should not be applied to the entire multitude of the redeemed. This body exactly corresponds in fact with the appellation. It is The Church of Christ, not apparently or by profession, but really, by a change of character and possession of privilege. It is the Universal Church, for it contains every sinner that is saved; and we need not hesitate to say that none can be saved who are not in it. It is the Holy Universal Church, for every member of it either is, or will be, sanctified by the Spirit, as he is redeemed by the blood of Christ. Can there be any hesitation, then, in concluding, that the body for which the name in question should be reserved is the multitude of the redeemed?

Before affirming this conclusion, however, it is due to the bishop to weigh two passages of Scripture, which he has adduced in support of his position. The first of them is taken from 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13, and is as follows: “For, as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.” It will be easy to prove that this passage is wholly remote from the bishop’s purpose.

It is to be observed, that the apostle is showing, not what the church of Christ on earth *is*, but what it *ought to be*. So Bloomfield justly expounds it. “Under a metaphor derived from the mutual dependence of the various parts of the human body, the apostle *inculcates the lesson* that all true members of the Christian body should so act as to form one



united whole, each mutually contributing to the common benefit of the church universal."\* The connexion requires this preceptive sense; and the meaning evidently is, that, as the body, although it have many members, is one in action, so the church of Christ should be one in action, although its members be endowed with a diversity of gifts. In the 13th verse, the apostle asserts that a basis was laid for the cultivation of this practical harmony, by the state of mind in which it was to be presumed they had associated themselves. "For by one spirit," says he, "we have all been baptized into one body, . . . for we have all imbibed one spirit." That there can be no reference here, otherwise than metaphorically, to the ordinance of baptism, seems plain from this consideration, that Christian professors are declared to be "baptized into one body *by one spirit*." The meaning is, that the oneness of spirit, or the similarity of feeling, fairly presumable to be the actuating impulse of those who voluntarily associate themselves as professed disciples of Christ, and expressly asserted in the last clause of the verse to characterize true disciples, lays a foundation for harmonious action among them afterwards; or, in the apostle's metaphor, baptizes them into one body. This being the meaning of the passage, it can clearly render no service to the bishop.

To his quotation of the 12th and 13th verses, the bishop adds the 27th. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." If this were literally so, it would overthrow his position by proving too much; since it would clearly prove that the church at Corinth, to whom these words were addressed, was the church universal. *Σῶμα Χριστοῦ*, however, without the article, cannot be translated "*the* body of Christ." The literal rendering is "*a* body of Christ," or "*a* Christian body;" that is (as justly given by Schleusner), "*a* Christian society," resembling the human body. In the words thus quoted the apostle concludes his lengthened illustration of the metaphor introduced in the 12th verse; and he fitly reminds the Corinthians, on the one hand, that the society they constituted bore a resemblance to the body (of which he had been speaking), and on the other, that they individually resembled the members of which it was composed. There is here as little to the bishop's purpose

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\* Bloomfield's Greek Testament, with English notes.

as in the antecedent verses. I set it down, therefore, that his attempt to prove by these words of the apostle that "the body of Christ," meaning thereby the Universal Church, is composed of societies on earth professing his name, entirely fails.

To the second passage adduced by the bishop (Eph. ii. 19-22) I need not advert at any length, since it merely exhibits the state of privilege annexed, in the bishop's view, to the "united society of believers" of which he supposed he had proved the existence. If, as I have attempted to show, he has failed in this, whatever the state of privilege described may be, it can avail nothing to his purpose. The only observations required are, that the apostle is evidently describing the privileges attained by the Ephesians through faith in Christ, and not through baptism, and that the edifice in which they are said to have been "builded together" can be constructed of nothing less than the entire multitude of the redeemed.

It thus appears that neither the one nor the other of the texts which the bishop has adduced has any relation to the matter in hand. Not in either did the apostle mean what the bishop means, or intend to give the slightest possible countenance to the notion which the bishop puts forward. The case is this. The bishop has found words which, taken out of their connexion and their meaning, are capable of being applied to his purpose: he therefore gives them to us, not to convey the apostle's sentiments, but his own. This unscrupulous use of the words of Scripture is wholly unwarrantable, and obnoxious to severe censure. What we expect when the Scripture is quoted, and what should always be given, is the meaning of the writer. Nothing less than this can supply proof to any argument; while everything less is at once a dishonour to the Word of God, and a fraud on the souls of men.

I fall back, then, on the position I had previously established—namely, that the only body which can properly be called The Universal Church, or, in an absolute sense, The Church, is the multitude of the redeemed. These constitute in reality "one mystical body, members one of another, Jesus Christ himself being the head" (see Eph. i. 22, and Col. i. 18); and to be incorporated with them is a high and unquestioned privilege.

According to this view of the Church Universal, a part of it is always upon earth; and it may be conceived (although I do not find this sentiment in the Sermons under review) that such professing communities as possess the required characteristics are the constituent elements of at least the terrestrial portion of it. There are decisive objections, however, to such a representation.

It is obvious that all the members of the Universal Church must be finally saved. Were it not so, there would be members of it in everlasting perdition; and, consequently, this glorious assembly, instead of being gathered into one hereafter, would ultimately be divided between heaven and hell, as it is now between earth and heaven. It is directly asserted, however, by the bishop of London himself, that even the true church on earth does not consist of persons who will be finally saved, but that, on the contrary, members of it may come short of that felicity. Hence, then, the church on earth and the Church Universal cannot be the same, since they do not consist of the same parties.

Again. It is laid down in Scripture that union with Christ, and through him with the multitude of the redeemed—that is, with the Universal Church—is effected by faith in him. Now faith in Christ may be exercised by persons not united in outward Christian fellowship with any church, whether false or true: and thus, from another point of view, it appears that the parties included in the church on earth and the Church Universal are not the same. Hence again, therefore, it is to be inferred that there is no identity in the bodies themselves.

Once more. The mode of incorporation with the church on earth is declared by the bishop to be baptism. Now baptism cannot be held to be the mode of incorporation into the Church Universal. One plain reason for this is, that baptism is not coeval with it. The Universal Church has been in course of formation ever since the fall of man, and doubtless many members were gathered into it during the four thousand years preceding the advent of the Son of God. During this long period, however, baptism had no existence. If baptism is the mode of incorporation with the mystical body of Christ, and the way in which (according to the bishop) every elect sinner is added to it, how were Enoch and Noah, Abraham and Moses, David and the prophets,

admitted into it? The only answer is, that they were incorporated with the Universal Church by faith in the expected Messiah. This faith they exercised without baptism, and without baptism it availed. *The mode of union with the Universal Church, therefore, this ordinance clearly is not.*

But I go further, and affirm that baptism is not *a mode of union with the Universal Church.* I prove this by recalling the bishop's admission that there may be persons united with the church on earth who may, and do, perish for ever. Now no member of the Universal Church can ever perish. If the baptized were members of it, therefore, none of them would perish: but baptism does not secure their safety; consequently, it does not unite them to the Universal Church. Faith, which does unite sinners to the Universal Church, at the same time ensures their salvation. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," said the apostle, "*and thou shalt be saved*" (Acts xvi. 31).

I now reaffirm my position, that even those professing Christian societies which the bishop would allow to constitute the church on earth, do not constitute the terrestrial part, or any part, of the Church Universal. All such societies are composed, at best, of *apparent* Christians; the Church Universal is composed of *real* ones. The terrestrial portion of this body consists of all truly pious persons scattered throughout the world, whether united in church-fellowship, or not. They are in spiritual union with each other by means of their common union to Christ; but they have no external union. They do not constitute a "visible body," nor have they any ecclesiastical incorporation. They are one with Christ; they are one in Christ; and they are one, through Christ, with all the redeemed. This, and this alone, is their catholicity.

In the Scriptures the phrase *The Church* is evidently applied to terrestrial societies in a modified meaning. As *a church* is a company of professed believers in Christ, so *The Church* is naturally formed of the entire aggregate of such companies. The name, therefore, may be regarded as denoting merely the fact of a social Christian profession. In this view, all parties who call themselves Christian churches are so. Any company of persons may give themselves that name; and who has a right to take it from them? It may be true that no persons ought to take that name who do not fulfil

certain conditions; but who is to judge whether this is realized in a given case? Those assuming the name doubtless think they are justified in it; and, if they are in error, their case is to be adjudicated, not by any portion of their fellow-professors, but by the Lord of all. If any party were to be held authorized to examine the pretensions of the rest, and to say to one, "You are a church," and to another, "You are not," it would be a matter of insuperable difficulty to determine which it should be. The church of Rome, of course, would put in the first claim, and (so far as I can see any difference among claims which are all invalid) the best; but, if this should be allowed, the Church of England suffers immediate excision, and even the bishop of London is put out of the pale of salvation. The truth is, that, on this point, every society must judge for itself. None is called a church of Christ in the first instance by others, but by itself; and parties doing so afterwards merely recognize, by an act of courtesy to which all are entitled, the assumed appellation. The practice of inter-communion turns upon a question, not of ecclesiastical existence, but of ecclesiastical purity. It supposes one to ask, not whether a given professing body be a church, but whether it be what, in our judgment, a church ought to be, or so nearly such as to warrant our actual fellowship. The answer to this question will evidently vary according to the opinions of the propounder of it, and cannot in any case be set down as more than his opinion, without elevating the individual to the rank of an infallible arbiter of the meaning of Scripture, and destroying the right of private judgment altogether.

In fine, the *visible* church of Christ is nothing more than the church of Christ *as it is seen*. It is the apparent church of Christ, or that which appears to be such: that is to say, it consists of all societies which assume the name.

It is, I think, altogether an erroneous interpretation of the will, and even of the desire, of our Lord, to hold that his professed disciples are called on to cultivate a visible unity, or a unity of form and organization. His prayer, recorded in John xvii., is plainly directed to a union of heart and affection:—"That they may be one, *as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee*; that they also may be one in us." That an external and ecclesiastical unity is intended by this language, is one of the hardest things that divines of any class have ever undertaken to demonstrate.



The application of the principle now laid down to the bishop of London's doctrine of The Church is obvious. His idea of the necessity of a sinner's being incorporated with The Church in order to salvation, rests entirely upon the supposed existence in the world of a body which can properly be called "Christ's Holy Catholic Church." Of course, if this supposition is unfounded, there is no possibility of the contemplated incorporation; and a sinner, if saved at all, must be saved without this process. As to Christian communities which do exist upon earth, whether separately or in combination, since they do not constitute the "united society" he contemplates, it does not appear that the bishop would attach any importance at all to the process of incorporation with them. I do no injustice to the bishop's doctrine, therefore, in saying that, if the existence of the body he designates is disproved, the whole of his system is overturned; and I am sure that I do only justice to himself in believing that he would immediately abandon his system, if he saw that its foundation was destroyed.

### III.

I proceed now to advert to the bishop's account of the design and efficacy of The Church. He tells us "that its office is to bring sinners to Christ, by furnishing to those who are incorporated into it the means of knowledge and holiness; and that it is, therefore, not merely *instrumental*, as a teacher, but *sacramental*, as a medium of the believer's personal union with his Saviour, conveying and dispensing grace" (p. 16).

Of course, in all this it is "Christ's Holy Catholic Church" which the bishop has in view; and the proved non-existence of such a body on earth invalidates it all. But, passing this, let us notice the principal points in this representation.

The bishop here acquaints us that The Church has an "office." This language is objectionable. Doubtless there are purposes for which Christ instituted that organized association of his followers, under various modifications of which so many parties have assumed the name of a church; but to say that The Church has an "office" is to speak in tropes, and to use a metaphor adapted to mislead. It implies

a unity in the church, which has already been denied to it; and a compactness and possibility of united action which it could not have, even if it were one.

"Its office," the bishop goes on to say, "is to bring sinners to Christ." If I could admit that The Church has an office at all, there is a sense in which I could readily admit this. Undoubtedly, to bring sinners to himself is one of the purposes for which Christ directed the organization of his followers, and a purpose which every professed disciple of his should zealously endeavour to promote. The bishop, however, is not thinking of "those that are without," but of the "sinners" that are within; for he says—"Its office is to bring sinners to Christ, by furnishing to those *who are incorporated into it* the means of knowledge and holiness." I cannot agree with him here. I look, for example, to the church at Jerusalem, and to the entire Acts of the Apostles; and it seems to me evident that the Gospel ministry there maintained, in so far as it related to the salvation of sinners, was addressed, not to the church, but to the world, not to those within the pale, but to those without it. "The means of knowledge and holiness" were undoubtedly furnished to those within; but this was for the edification of the saints, not the salvation of sinners.

The bishop proceeds. The Church "is, therefore, not merely *instrumental*, as a teacher, but *sacramental*, as a medium of the believer's personal union with his Saviour." Let us ponder this.

The Church is "sacramental." What, then, is "The Church"? The bishop's own account of it is, "that it is the whole body of the faithful, in all parts of the world" (p. 6). But "The Church is—sacramental"! What, then, is a sacrament?

A subsequent expression throws a melancholy light upon the bishop's meaning. "The Church is sacramental," says he, "conveying and dispensing grace." He here takes up the general idea of a sacrament as held by the Anglican and some other churches—namely, that it is a ceremonial act in the performance of which divine grace is bestowed; as regenerating grace in baptism, and nourishment by Christ's body in the Lord's supper. His meaning is, then, not literally, according to his own words, that "the church is sacramental," but that the act of being united to the church is an

act of a sacramental character, an act in which, as in baptism and the Lord's supper, grace is bestowed.

Before proceeding to animadvert on this sentiment itself, I must notice the manner in which it is expressed. It is not merely the unintelligible phrase, "The Church is sacramental," but the mischievous expression, "The Church confers and dispenses grace," to which I desire to draw attention. The language employed is adapted to convey to an unguarded reader (and this class comprehends almost all readers) the idea of an act performed by The Church. Now the conferring and dispensing of grace, whether the grace of regeneration, or the grace of pardon, or grace of any other kind, does not belong to The Church in any sense of that term; but is the absolute prerogative of our Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever modesty there may seem to be in assuming this prerogative, not for individuals, but for The Church collectively, the assumption cannot for a moment be admitted. I cannot hesitate to affirm in the broadest manner, that The Church cannot, in any sense of that term, or to any extent whatever, confer or dispense grace. If the contrary of this is held, I challenge explicitness in the assertion of it.

Were any attempt made to affirm this obnoxious dogma, I should immediately ask, Who, then, is The Church? "The general assembly of the faithful" (which is the bishop's definition) it cannot be, since they cannot be combined in unity of action. Some other body, therefore, must be meant by the church in this connexion, and I require the name of it. Who, under the name of The Church, claims to confer and dispense grace?

I know of no answer that could be given to this inquiry, but that the clergy are, *quoad hoc*, The Church, and that they, therefore, can confer and dispense grace. But I should object to the clergy being called The Church. It is calling them what they are not: and, although in some churches they may have acquired the executive power, there is nothing to show that a prerogative which, if it belong to The Church, must be diffused through the whole body, has been concentrated in them. For the clergy of any church to make such an assumption would expose them to the justest imputations of artifice and priestcraft, and the severest denunciations merited by hypocrisy and fraud. It would result, moreover, from such an assumption, that the power of

conferring and dispensing grace must reside with each individual of the clerical body; since the clergy of the whole church cannot act in unison, and each must, in the great majority of instances, act alone. We should thus arrive at the monstrous conclusion, that every individual of the clergy has within his power, and at his discretion, the glorious prerogative of the One Mediator, that of conferring and dispensing grace—of regenerating souls, and forgiving sins! Even apostles never assumed such a power: yet nothing less than a claim to it lurks in that insidious and pernicious phrase, “The Church confers and dispenses grace.”

I return now to what I have before stated to be the probable meaning of the bishop—namely, that the act of incorporation with the church is one in which grace is received by the party, The Church being “a medium of the believer’s personal union with his Saviour.”

We have here the reason assigned why in the act of church-union grace is received—namely, that, through being united to The Church, the party is united to Christ. On this I make two observations. The first is, that this representation cannot be true of any Christian societies on earth, since none of them constitute that mystical body of Christ which the bishop has in his eye. The second is, that, with regard to the church in its spiritual sense, the true and only Church Universal, it inverts altogether the evangelical order. The bishop conceives that believers are united to the church first, and then, through this medium, to Christ: whereas, on the contrary, they are united to Christ first, and through him to his church. It is the immediate effect of faith in Christ to unite a sinner vitally with him; and through this medium he becomes connected by living sympathy with all other believers, each of whom is, in like manner, connected with Christ. The only way to become a member of the mystical body, is to be united with the Head. So far, therefore, from The Church being the medium of union with Christ, Christ is the only medium of union to The Church.

The Church, then, is not “the appointed medium of a sinner’s union to Christ;” and, consequently, being incorporated with The Church is not the step which the bishop asserts it to be in the process of a sinner’s salvation. So far from being an act in which grace is conferred on the party, it is justly to be regarded as nothing more than an act

associating him with an organized body of Christian professors, and making no difference whatever in his religious character or condition. Whether a person be so associated or not, he is in equal need of salvation, is equally welcome to it, and is to obtain it in the same way. He must in either case repent of sin, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; and, in either case, if he do so he shall be saved.

#### IV.

I shall now proceed to show that the benefits which the bishop would lead us to expect from incorporation with The Church are unreal and illusory. Here I must beg the reader's attention to the sentiments respecting baptism expressed in the following passage:—

“To this mystical body each individual sinner, who is ‘elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ,’\* is added; united thereto by baptism; ‘which,’ says St. Peter, ‘doth also now save us, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.’ A new principle of life is infused into him; he is regenerate; born anew of water and of the Spirit; and placed in a new relation to God, as one of his own peculiar family and household; furnished with all the means of realizing to himself the promise of salvation given by Jesus Christ to all penitent sinners, and sealed to *him* personally in baptism” (p. 8).

The bishop is here showing how it is that (in his judgment) the process of being added to The Church facilitates a sinner's salvation. It is because baptism is the mode of incorporation; so that, in being added to The Church, a person is necessarily baptized, and derives the advantages which that ordinance conveys. It is necessary to inquire, therefore, whether these views of baptism can be sustained.

It may be observed, however, that this position of the argument is equivalent to an abandonment of it. The main assertion of the bishop is that “those who are to be saved must be added to the church.” His doctrine here is that the benefits of this process result from being baptized. Now, being

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\* The reader will glance by the way at the singular conjunction here effected by the bishop between the ordinance of baptism and the doctrine of election. “Elect unto obedience,” says the apostle; unto baptism, says the bishop. Not to obedience, certainly; for he acknowledges that baptized persons may be disobedient, even to their perdition.



baptized and being added to the church are not one and the same thing; neither, as two things, are they inseparable. For the sake of the argument I will admit that no person can be added to the church unless he is baptized; but then I assert, on the other hand, that a person may be baptized without being added to the church.

To make this appear on the bishop's own ground. He defines The Church to be "the whole body of the faithful in all parts of the world" possessing the necessary characteristic features. Of course, I may take as a branch of the true church thus constituted, the Church of England. Now the Church of England admits the validity (under the name of lay baptism) of the baptism of Dissenters, and receives them to her communion without re-baptism. One of her bishops had no other baptism. This demonstrates that, in relation to the present argument, being baptized is one thing, and being added to the church is another; and that persons may be baptized without being added to the church. Now the bishop declares that a person who is baptized "has a new principle of life infused into him; he is regenerate; born anew of water and of the Spirit, and placed in a new relation to God, as one of his own peculiar family and household; and furnished with all the means of realizing to himself the promise of salvation given by Jesus Christ to all penitent sinners, and sealed to him personally in baptism." But these are the benefits which (according to the same authority) are derivable from being added to the church: whence it is clear, from the bishop's own showing, that the benefits which are alleged to follow from a person's being added to the church can be enjoyed without such incorporation, and that this process is, consequently, of no necessity to salvation at all. If the case is not so, and if persons baptized but not added to the church are not benefited to this extent, then it follows that baptism is not the means of conferring the benefits ascribed to it.

Another remark may be interposed here. It is that the bishop ascribes efficacy to baptism, only on the supposition of its uniting the party to "Christ's Holy Catholic Church." This is plain, both from the language he employs, and from the whole scope of his argument. It can be doing him no injustice, therefore, to say that, if he were to be satisfied that baptism did not unite the party to The Church in this

sense, he would not reckon it the source of any spiritual benefit at all. Let it be regarded in itself, or be reckoned only the means of annexing an individual to some particular company of professed believers in Christ, and it is clearly inferrible that the bishop of London would not deem it an act conferring spiritual privileges on the baptized. So it must be regarded, however, if I have successfully shown that there is no such thing as Christ's Holy Catholic Church, in his sense of that phrase. In this case, baptism cannot unite a person with the body he has designated; and, consequently, it cannot, in his opinion, have the beneficial influence he has described.

But let us pass on to the benefits which the bishop alleges to result from baptism. "A new principle of life is infused into [the baptized]; he is regenerate; born anew of water and the Spirit; and placed in a new relation to God, as one of his peculiar family and household; furnished with all the means of realizing to himself the promise of salvation given by Jesus Christ to all penitent sinners, and sealed to him *personally* in baptism."

For these statements the bishop furnishes no scriptural authority. He quotes, indeed, incidentally, the language of Peter, that "baptism doth also now save us;" and he seems to challenge an application of John iii. 5. Both of these passages it will be proper we should examine.

We are "united thereto [to The Church] by 'baptism;' which, says St. Peter, 'doth also now save us, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.'" So the bishop of London. The words of the apostle are these:—"Baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. iii. 21). No doubt, the apostle says here that "baptism doth also now save us, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ;" but he modifies the apparent meaning of this assertion by the introduction of a parenthesis, which the bishop, in his quotation, leaves out. The effect of this omission is to do evident injustice to the sacred writer, and to make his words convey a sense he did not intend. Let the force of the parenthetical clause be weighed. "Baptism saves us: not," however, "the putting away of the filth of the flesh" (that is, not the literal washing), "but the answer of a good conscience towards God" saves us. The

saving effect, whatever this may be, is thus separated from the ordinance of baptism itself, and transferred to that "answer of a good conscience," which was ordinarily and properly connected with it. It would be but a diversion of my own and the reader's attention from the subject before us, if I should attempt to explain what may be meant, either by "the answer of a good conscience," or by the saving effect ascribed to it. Everything pertinent to my present purpose has been done, if I have shown—what, I think, indeed, is evident on the face of the passage—that the saving effect intended is not ascribed by the apostle to the ordinance of baptism.

By using the phrase, "born anew of water and the Spirit," the bishop makes a covert reference (as I suppose) to the discourse of our Lord, recorded in the third chapter of John. It would have been more candid, however, to have quoted the passage, as it would then have been made certain that stress was designedly laid upon it. This is now doubtful; but, assuming it to be so, I will make the single observation which becomes necessary. The words of our Lord are—"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 5). Now, whatever may be the correct interpretation of this passage (which is one of universally admitted difficulty), there is no evidence that it relates to baptism; and enough to show that it cannot relate to that ordinance lies in this consideration—that, on this supposition, salvation without baptism would be impossible. The language of our Lord is here so perfectly absolute and unmodified as to admit of no exception; yet the conclusion is at such utter variance with the evangelical system, that no party has found it possible to maintain it. To quote this passage as showing the attitude and influence of baptism, and yet to hold that any person unbaptized can be saved, is an inconsistency from which every faithful interpreter of the Holy Scriptures ought instinctively to recoil.

A similar observation may be made, in passing, on our Lord's declaration in the commission, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." The bishop quotes this in the very outset of his discourse, and relies upon it as showing that baptism, by incorporating persons with The Church,

contributed to their salvation. My remark on this is, that if baptism is, on the ground of this passage, allowed to have a saving efficacy at all, it must be held to be *essential* to salvation; for, in this case, it becomes directly associated with faith in this respect, and we have no more right to modify the influence of the one than of the other. It is true, indeed, that our Lord himself indicates a difference between faith and baptism, inasmuch as he does not combine them in the succeeding clause. He does not say, "He that believeth not [and is not baptized] shall be condemned." The difference thus indicated, however, is a difference of office. Faith is the instrument of salvation, baptism is not; for, if it were, the absence of it, like that of faith, must be fatal. The intention and effect of joining baptism with faith on this occasion, is simply to exhibit it as a duty arising out of the exercise of faith, and as challenging the immediate and critical obedience of professed believers.

I shall now proceed to notice the benefits said to be conferred by baptism, in the inverse order of their exhibition.

1. The first in this order is a special interest in the promise of salvation. This promise, we are instructed, is in baptism "*sealed personally*" to the party baptized. This is not very clear. Does it mean that the baptized party is then actually forgiven? Or, that he will be forgiven whether he repents or not? Or, that it is made sure that he will be forgiven if he repents? If, as I suppose, the last, what is the benefit? Was not the same thing sure before, and sure *to him*? And is not the same thing sure to another, although unbaptized? Where is the difference in the position of the two parties, the baptized and the unbaptized, when, as the bishop justly affirms, Christ has made "the promise of salvation to *all* penitent sinners"?

2. Again, the bishop says that a baptized person is "furnished with all the means of realizing to himself the promise of salvation given by Jesus Christ to all penitent sinners." This also is dark phraseology. To "realize the promise of salvation" is, of course, to obtain the salvation promised. And it seems equally plain that "the means" of obtaining the salvation promised must be the fulfilment of the condition on which it is promised. The promise being made "to all penitent sinners," it is, of course, "realized" by all who repent. Yet the bishop speaks of a sinner being



"furnished with all the means of realizing to himself the promise of salvation." What are these means?

The utmost that I can gather from a careful survey of the bishop's language is, that, after a person is baptized, The Church will furnish him, as a "sinner to be saved" (p. 19), "with the means of knowledge and holiness" (p. 16). I shall have hereafter to animadvert on the sentiment that a course of "holiness" after baptism is the way in which a sinner is to be saved; the observation which is pertinent now is that, whatever means of religious instruction may be furnished to the baptized, the ministrations of every church furnish them equally to the unbaptized. For they are all of them public, and may be profited by as largely by persons who are not baptized as by those who are. The alleged advantage in this respect is a nullity.

3. The bishop further tells us, that a baptized person is "placed in a new relation to God, as one of his own peculiar family and household." In this it is implied that the condition of persons before baptism is one of wrath and condemnation. And this cannot be confined to actual transgressors; because, although the bishop—and the fact is very remarkable—has said nothing in these discourses about the baptism of infants, we know that (in accordance with his church) he maintains it. His idea, therefore, must be, that all mankind are from their birth under God's wrath; and as this cannot be in consequence of their own transgression, it must be in consequence of the sin of our first parents in Eden. Hence, then, it appears that the bishop views baptism as designed to release the children of Adam from that primary curse, and to replace them in a condition to render acceptable service to their Maker.

If I were to admit the premises thus laid down, I should not be constrained to admit the conclusion, of which, in truth, the premises afford no evidence whatever. If it were true that all Adam's posterity are under wrath for his sin, it could not be inferred from this that they are to be delivered from such a state *by baptism*. This cannot be established without Scripture testimony, which, I believe, is totally wanting. The ecclesiastical conceit which we have in its place weighs nothing.

But I do not admit the premises. I allow, indeed, that Adam underwent probation in Eden as the head and repre-



sentative of his posterity, and that they were involved in the consequences of his deed. I submit, however, that those consequences were so arranged that the penalty should not be diffusive, but should be confined to the persons of the immediate transgressors. This appears, I think, both from the nature of the penalty, which was *death*, and from the period of its infliction, which was *immediately*. "In the day that thou eatest thou shalt surely die" (Gen. ii. 17). Under such a system there could not, in case of transgression, be any posterity. If Adam's own life was spared, it was by an act of clemency founded upon the evangelical system, which was necessarily brought into immediate action. It is under the same system that the posterity of Adam have sprung up; and they are no more liable to God's wrath for his sin, than he himself was after the forgiveness of it in Eden. I take the truth to be, that all the *penal* consequences of the first sin were mercifully removed, both from our first parents and their contingent posterity, on the very day it was committed; and that the system of evangelical mercy, which immediately supervened, comprehended such effects only of the first transgression as were suited to the new state of probation, their penal character being taken away. I contend, therefore, that mankind are not born under a curse, but under a blessing; that they come into existence through the interposition of a Saviour, and are therefore free from all liability to punishment on account of the primary transgression. This being so, the function which has been ecclesiastically assigned to baptism has no basis in fact. It is a pure imagination. Apart from this or any other process, the aspect of God towards every human being at birth is perfectly and eminently benign. The relation of our whole race to him is one of peace and love, and is liable to be interrupted by nothing but voluntary disobedience. We are all in a condition in which, on the one hand, the right performance of duty will be acceptable, and, on the other, the commission of sin will be treated according to the tenor of the Gospel.

4. Another benefit resulting from baptism, according to the bishop's account, is the following:—"A new principle of life is infused into [the baptized]; he is regenerate; born anew of water and of the Spirit" (p. 8). This agrees, I conceive, with the assertion in another place, that, without

"incorporation into the church" by baptism, to do what is requisite to salvation is "impracticable" (p. 2). In the bishop's judgment, then, mankind before baptism are deficient in capacity for right action. It is "impracticable." They are not "capable of being saved" (p. 1). "A new principle of life" is necessary, before anything can be done aright; and this is infused by the Holy Spirit regenerating the party in baptism.

Here, again, I observe, that, if I were to admit the premises, I should not be obliged to admit the conclusion. If it were true that mankind are naturally destitute of capacity for right action, it would not follow that the wanting capacity was conferred *in baptism*. It might, or might not, be so; but it must not be assumed without evidence.

But I again deny the premises. The idea that the posterity of Adam are, as they enter the world, deficient in capacity for right action, appears to me to rest on no solid foundation, and, indeed, to be contrary to truth. I allow that, in consequence of their descent from him, they come into being with a bias towards evil, which is what I understand by the familiar expression that they are depraved; but there is a broad distinction between this and a want of capacity for right action. To me it seems clear beyond question, that capacity for right action consists exclusively in the possession of rational faculties, and that it is inherent in every person (beyond the period of infancy) of sane mind.

Upon this subject let me ask the following questions.

1. If the rational faculties of a person were fully exercised, what kind of action would result? Right action, I suppose. But, if not right action, then wrong. Wrong action, that is to say, would result from the full exercise of our rational faculties! Can any one arrive at this conclusion?

2. When a course of wrong action is pursued, have the rational faculties been fully exercised? I conceive not. There is always, surely, as the cause of wrong action, some want of due consideration, and of regard to the facts and motives adapted to influence us.

3. If more than rational faculties be necessary to right action, what more? "A new principle of life," says the bishop. But this itself needs explanation. It is a very pretty phrase, but what is the meaning of it? A new

*principle* of life (to the best of my understanding) must be either a new faculty, or a new impulse. I suppose I may assume that the bishop does not contend for the former, or maintain that the Holy Spirit adds a new physical element to the rational constitution of man. In the latter sense, a new principle of life is only some new condition of the affections. This I admit to be imparted by the Spirit in regeneration; but I altogether deny that it constitutes capacity for right action. It constitutes impulse to right action, not capacity for it. Again, then, I ask, if more than rational faculties be necessary to right action, what more?

I will not satisfy myself, however, with arriving at this point. Regeneration, although it does not constitute a capacity for right action, does supply an impulse to it. And this impulse is effectual. After regeneration persons do pursue a course of right action. Now the efficacy of the impulse demonstrates the previous existence of the capacity. Where there is not a capacity for action, no impulse can possibly produce it. The fact that, when a sinner is "made willing," he serves God, is a proof that he could have done it before.

4. If men have not a capacity for right action, how can they be charged with sin? "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against the universal injustice and impiety of men" (Rom. i. 18); but with what justice, if men labour under an *incapacity* to do well? Incapacity is surely a valid excuse for inaction. How can he by possibility incur blame for wrong who *cannot* do right? He has no option. If he acts at all, it must be in that course of which alone he is capable; and, having no choice, he can incur no blame. You might in this case as well blame the tiger, or the tempest, as the man.

These remarks do not at all lay me open to the charge of disregarding the work of the Holy Spirit. I own and adore him as the author of regeneration. What we have before us is a question concerning the nature of regeneration. It is mistaken, I think, when a capacity for right action is supposed to be produced by it.

It results, then, that, before baptism, and altogether apart from it, mankind possess in their rational faculties a capacity for right action; that is to say, that they are in the position,

without baptism, which the bishop says they attain by it. Here again, therefore, we find the alleged office of baptism to be a fiction.

## V.

The bishop, I have said, leads his readers to anticipate from baptism unreal benefits. I now go on to observe, that he indicates, in my judgment, an erroneous course to the baptized. It is not much that he says on this subject; but his idea is clearly enough conveyed when he affirms that the baptized, "by their incorporation into the church, are enabled to work out their own salvation, though with fear and trembling" (p. 2). There is a covert reference here, no doubt, to the words of the apostle (Phil. ii. 12), words of which I am not about to question either the authority, or the importance. But I think the bishop misapplies them; and this in two respects.

1. In the first place, his manner implies that a course of godly living—which, of course, is the substantial import of the phrase, "Work out your own salvation"—is that which, after baptism, is required to this end. His idea seems to be, that by baptism persons are "placed in a new relation to God, as his own peculiar family and household;" that they receive "a new principle of life;" that they are "furnished with all the means" of knowledge and holiness; and that what they have then to do is to maintain a course of practical piety—"to work out their own salvation."

I first look at this representation in its relation to the vast majority of baptized persons, those who have been subjected to that ordinance in their infancy. And I observe that it entirely supersedes, with respect to them, the evangelical injunction of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. So far as they are concerned, this duty has no place in the bishop's directory. There can, indeed, be no place for it; since, according to him, that release from wrath and condemnation which is the appropriate result of faith, has been already effected by baptism itself. The baptized are thereby "placed in a new relation to God, as his peculiar family and household," so that they have no occasion for faith. Indeed, a profession of faith is by the bishop (in accordance with his church) made a pre-requisite to baptism, and the duty is

deemed to be performed by the sponsors. After baptism, therefore, on the bishop's system, faith has no place; but only that course of good living by which the baptized are "to work out their salvation." It follows from this, that all who are baptized in infancy (an immense multitude of persons) are to be saved without the exercise of faith at all, and merely by their own moral and religious lives. That this is the bishop's meaning is clear from the following language:—

"We must caution you against the fatal error of substituting the means for the end, and of reposing securely upon the fact of your church-membership, without a constant and anxious reference to the object of the church's institution, and your own personal interest therein, the glorification of God through Jesus Christ, first by the sanctification, then by the salvation, of sinners, yourselves amongst the rest.

"You have been admitted into the church in order that you may be brought to him who 'hath purchased it with his own blood,' and joined to him as its head in spiritual communion; that by the use of all the appointed means 'Christ may be formed in you;' and that, as by his grace you have been made, as St. Peter says, 'partakers of the divine nature,' you may give proof of that spiritual transformation by showing that you have 'escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust'" (pp. 74, 75).

This is, in my judgment, a subversion of the entire Gospel, both in principle and in practice.

I look at it in principle. Certainly, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ was required by the apostles of every person who would be saved; and nothing less than this could have been consistent with the specific and absolute annexation of salvation to it by their Lord. It would, indeed, have been preposterous to attach salvation to this condition at all, if it was to be so quickly placed on a different footing by the introduction and prevalence of infant baptism. Faith could in this case be required only of a small number of persons, while a totally different mode of salvation would be inculcated on the great majority of mankind. The effect of this would be to make baptism supersede the grace of God, and introduce "another Gospel, which is not another."

I look at it in practice. Here are persons who, having been baptized in infancy, are told that they are already in "a new relation to God as his peculiar family and household;" that they have received "a new principle of life;" and that they have now "to work out their own salvation."



What is the tendency of this? Clearly to set them on a course of good living. The self-renunciation and submission to the righteousness of God expressed by the term faith, can never be produced in them by such instruction. They can never even learn by it their true condition of guilt and misery, nor know their need of a Saviour. They will inevitably build their hope on a false foundation; and, if they try to get to heaven at all, will labour only to establish their own righteousness, in ignorance of the righteousness which is of God. The effect of the system which I am examining, in thus withdrawing the multitudes who are influenced by it from everything that can be deemed evangelical hope, is unutterably melancholy.

The semblance of authority for the sentiment I am combating, which the bishop derives from his covert use of the language of the apostle in Phil. ii. 12, 13, will disappear on an examination of the passage. It is as follows: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure." Making no explicit reference to this text, the bishop uses the phraseology of it when he says, that baptized believers are "enabled to work out their own salvation, though with fear and trembling." The effect of this is to produce an impression that, according to the Scripture, mankind are to "work out their own salvation"—that is, to make their way to heaven by pure morals and good works. If the passage in question is candidly examined, however, it will be found to convey no such idea. The scope and object of the writer are altogether remote from it. He is not addressing himself to sinners, and exhibiting to persons the way of salvation; he is writing to saints, and directing them in the path of Christian consistency. In the first chapter he has spoken of his correspondents in the following terms: "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now; being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (ver. 3-6). No words can more clearly indicate parties already (in the judgment of the writer) interested in salvation. It could

not be to them that he would afterwards speak as sinners, telling them how to be saved. The scope of his precepts is set forth by himself in the following terms:—"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ" (ch. i. 27); "that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation" (ch. ii. 15). That the apostle should speak of the course of Christian virtue he prescribes as "working out (or completely effecting) their salvation," shows him to employ the word salvation in this instance with some greater latitude than at other times belongs to it. The salvation of a sinner is often spoken of as his deliverance from the deserved wrath of God, and his introduction to a state of safety and privilege. In this passage, however, Paul regards salvation as comprehending also the entire work of sanctification; which, being commenced by faith, is to be "wrought out," or completed, in a course of Christian duty and exemplary virtue. This is, undoubtedly, the natural fruit of faith, the necessary evidence of its sincerity, and the genuine consummation of its influence; but it is not the way of salvation, nor is it any part of the instrumentality by which we are saved. We are saved by grace, through faith in the expiatory sacrifice of the Son of God; by faith wholly, and by faith only—no graces or virtues of the Christian furnishing an element which can be mingled with it, and nothing being left undone by it which can furnish an occasion for aid from any other quarter. Thus the apostle: "By grace are ye saved, through faith" (Eph. ii. 8).

That this is the entire and unqualified truth of the matter may appear from this further observation, that, in none of those places in which the way of salvation is the subject spoken of is any countenance given to the sentiment that sinners are "to work out their own salvation." The tenor of the great commission is already before us. The apostles said in their ministry, "Repent ye, and be converted" (Acts iii. 19). Paul declares that he had spent his life in "testifying repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts xx. 21); and, in arguing the point (Eph. ii. 9), he affirms that we are saved "not by works, lest any man should boast." Were there any element by which the obvious doctrine of these passages should be modified, certainly it ought to be found somewhere in distinct connexion with the sub-

ject; it can never be satisfactorily derived from one of many evangelical precepts, by which the sacred writers enjoin and direct the cultivation of the Christian virtues.

2. There is yet another view to be taken of this subject. If the bishop errs in instructing the baptized that a course of good living is to save them, he errs no less in ascribing a defective and unscriptural influence to faith. The opening passage is in this respect very remarkable.

After quoting the words of the commission, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," the bishop immediately adds, "Those who were *so* baptized" (that is, *upon believing*) "were added to the church." He is not here speaking of infants, therefore, but of persons who had believed the Gospel. And yet of them he says no more than that they were "placed in a state capable of salvation," being now enabled to work it out by their own exertions.

Now, quite apart from baptism, this view of the position of persons who have believed the Gospel is, in my judgment, directly opposed to the Scriptures. The very words of the commission evidently contradict it—"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." To reduce this language of divine promise to the meaning assigned by the bishop is surely unwarrantable. I quote further, however, the words of the Lord Jesus (John v. 24): "He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." The apostles spoke in a similar manner. Thus Paul to the jailor at Philippi—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31). A state of positive privilege is everywhere connected in the apostolic writings with faith. "We who have believed do enter into rest. Believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Being justified by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Heb. iv. 3; 1 Pet. i. 8; Rom. v. 1). Faith is thus exhibited as an instrument by which a sinner, introduced into a state of gracious acceptance with God, acquires an actual interest in every evangelical blessing. The completeness and permanence of this state of privilege are, as it seems to me, distinctly and frequently declared in Holy Writ. A standing is acquired by faith in Christ which infers a title to salvation in its fullest import, and secures, through divine love and faithfulness, its ultimate consummation. (See John x. 27, 28.)

It is true, indeed, that those who believe in the Lord Jesus are under obligation to cultivate pure morals, and to maintain good works; but it is inconsistent with the word of truth to assign to these the place which they evidently hold in the bishop's system. Believers are so placed (according to him), not that it follows they will be finally saved, but that it will be their own fault if they are not; inasmuch as they are, in consequence of believing, enabled to work out their own salvation, which otherwise would have been impracticable. Here, therefore, it is plain that faith serves the purpose, not of saving a sinner, but simply of removing his inability to save himself, and of rendering it practicable for him to work out his salvation by a course of godly living, which thus becomes to him the way of obtaining it.

According to this view, although, as I have shown, faith in Christ is the instrument of salvation, a believer in Christ is not safe. He that believes, and has attained all the benefits which faith can confer, has yet to work out his own salvation. This is to render the doctrine of good works subversive of the grace of God, and of salvation by grace. It is surely enough for all purposes of Christian morals, and far more consistent with the scheme of evangelical truth, to maintain that good works are an obligatory manifestation of love to God, and a necessary fruit and evidence of faith in his Son.

## VI.

Having made these observations upon the bishop's doctrine of The Church, I shall proceed to some remarks upon the consequences to which it leads. The doctrine that Christ's Holy Catholic Church, or the church universal, consists of certain communities in this world, has a practical bearing of great breadth and importance: and it is with much truth that the bishop uses the following language—"It becomes, therefore, a question of most serious import to us all, What is the church? Upon which follows another of not inferior moment, Who can properly be said to have been added to the church?" (p. 5.)

In answer to the former of these questions, he subsequently enters upon an inquiry into the essential characteristics of The Church—of The True Church, that is to say,



as distinguished from whatever else may be so denominated. The features he ascertains are three; the pure preaching of the Gospel, the right administration of the ordinances, and ecclesiastical government by bishops. On the last point he dwells at length, as though the establishment of it had been one great object of the discourses. Having, as he conceives (and as I am not concerned to dispute), made good this ground, he is led in his third discourse to the critical question, "Whether the episcopal form of church government . . . is so obligatory upon Christians, that no congregation of believers, *not* being under this form of government, can be a true branch of Christ's Holy Catholic Church?" This question he states justly to be "of some difficulty in itself, and of still greater delicacy" (p. 52). It is here, in truth, that the bishop's doctrine brings him into collision, not only with non-episcopal churches in general, but with the continental Protestant churches in particular. The extreme tenderness with which the latter are treated in the discourses before us is not a little remarkable; but it is far from being inexplicable to those who are acquainted with the course of public affairs.

Nothing can be more clear, however, than that, if episcopal government be essential to a true branch of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, non-episcopal churches are not true branches of it; and that, upon the bishop's principles, there is no salvation within their pale. It would be too distressing, however, to come to such a conclusion; and accordingly, the bishop's third sermon is chiefly occupied with an apology for the foreign Protestants. The amount of it is, that, having been "deprived of the advantages of episcopacy in the first instance not by their own fault, but through the tyranny and obstinacy of the church of Rome," and "being also in that state of dependence on the secular power . . . from which, by their own mere motion, it is difficult, if not impossible, to extricate themselves," they do not "incur the guilt of schism" (pp. 53, 55).

Whether the foreign Protestants do or do not "incur the guilt of schism," or whether the alleged facts from which this is deduced are truly stated, I have no disposition to inquire. The only observation I have to make is this, that the bishop here entirely shifts his ground. He had been laboriously laying it down that episcopal government is a



necessary feature of Christ's Holy Catholic Church. Now he maintains that non-episcopal churches may be not "altogether aliens from The Church of Christ," if their non-episcopacy have arisen in such a manner as not to "incur the guilt of schism." The sin of schism, however, is an element altogether foreign to the bishop's argument, and the introduction of it only serves to show that he is afraid to tread on the ground he has laid. In truth, he thus overthrows it. For, if certain non-episcopal churches are "not altogether aliens from the church of Christ," inasmuch as they are not schismatical, then it is plain that episcopal government is not (as the bishop has been elaborately proving) essential to the constitution of the supposed Holy Catholic Church.

It may be observed, further, that the apology which the bishop thus discovers for the continental churches, if valid for them, avails for them only. Of the church of Scotland, for example, it cannot, I presume, be said that she is "deprived of the privileges of episcopacy not through her own fault, but only through the tyranny and obstinacy of the church of Rome;" inasmuch as it is notorious that the privileges of episcopacy were again and again offered to them from England, and even pressed upon them by the multiplied tender mercies of a church, undoubtedly far less tyrannical and more compassionate than the church of Rome. Neither is the Scottish church in a "state of dependence on the secular power" which would oppose any difficulty in the way of her becoming episcopal. Here, therefore, is schism as well as heresy; and, if there be any force in the bishop's argument at all, the church of Scotland is "altogether alien from The Church of Christ," and "entirely destitute of the privileges which belong to it."

As to the Protestant Dissenters of this country (with whom the author deems it an honour to be identified), they, of course, are open to the full bearing of the bishop's principles. Even with respect to them, however, he adopts the following hesitating language:—

"Yet, although none of the excuses which have been urged for the want of apostolical government in some national churches can be pleaded in justification of those who separate from our own episcopal church, I would not pronounce, even upon *them*, the sentence of absolute exclusion from the Church of Christ, nor declare that they are beyond the pale of salvation. I think them in a state of great uncertainty and hazard; I am sure that they want many spiritual

privileges and advantages which I am thankful for possessing; but I must leave the work of judgment to him who readeth the hearts of men, and 'knoweth them that are his;' and I will content myself with praying for them, and labouring to convince them of the duty and the rewards of unity. I remember that it was to a Samaritan leper, who was an alien from the elder church of God, one of an heretical community, that our blessed Saviour said, 'Thy faith hath made thee whole'" (pp. 72, 73).

With the utmost disposition to do justice to the charity which must be supposed to have dictated this passage, and declining the retort which it powerfully suggests, I will only say, that the bishop's reason for hesitating to "pronounce on" Dissenters "the sentence of absolute exclusion from the church of Christ" is altogether unsatisfactory. Undoubtedly, he cannot "read the hearts of men." But the question in the balance is not a question of character, but of position. It is not a question in the decision of which the state of the heart can make any difference. It is a question, not of candour, but of logic. If it be true that those who are to be saved must belong to The Church, and that we do not belong to it, then it is certain, *whatever our hearts may be*, that we are "beyond the pale of salvation," and the bishop may "pronounce sentence" accordingly. To do this is not to assume God's prerogative of judgment; it is merely to pursue to its inevitable close a course of human reasoning. Eminently charitable as the bishop undoubtedly is, we must pronounce the exercise of charity to be obtrusive and impertinent here. We demand one of two things: either that this distinguished prelate should affirm distinctly the conclusion for which, if his preceding reasons be valid, he has indisputably prepared the way; or that he should retract the premises from which it is to be inferred. While he hesitates to draw the conclusion, we hold him conscious of the invalidity of his argument; and charge him with a design to cover his retreat from what he knows to be an untenable position, by prostituting to this dishonest purpose the fairest of the graces, whether on earth or in heaven.

The bearing of the bishop's doctrine, however, is much wider than his application of it. Besides the foreign reformed churches and the English Dissenters, there are far greater numbers whose present condition and eternal prospects are affected by it. Turning away now from all reference to the "guilt of schism," a most fearful consequence

results from the general principle that incorporation into the visible church is necessary to salvation. It then follows that none can be saved but those who are so incorporated, or, in the bishop's words, baptized. A more dreadful sentiment it is scarcely possible to conceive. It sweeps like a pestilence over the face of human kind, and, were it but true, would spread desolation throughout the world.

"Incorporation with the visible church is necessary to salvation." To maintain this with even a semblance of consistency, there should have been a visible church in existence from the time of Adam's sin, and the introduction of the curse; since it is not to be supposed that, under a declared dispensation of mercy, God would leave mankind for any period destitute of the necessary means of salvation. It is an obvious fact, however, admitted on all hands, that a visible church was not instituted immediately after the fall. No one has affirmed the existence of such a society earlier than the call of Abraham; and there are many who hold (with myself) that it did not come into being till after the ascension of Jesus Christ. Not to create a difficulty on this point, however, let us assume the former date; and then we have the fact, that for two thousand years there was no visible church on earth. Yet, according to the bishop of London, incorporation with the visible church is necessary to salvation. It is an inevitable inference from these premises that no person anterior to the time of Abraham can have been saved. Assuredly, neither the bishop nor any one else gravely holds such a sentiment; but it is not the less true that it follows from the premises. And it proves them to be false. For, if persons who lived before the visible church existed have been saved, it is clear that incorporation with the visible church is *not* necessary to salvation.

The bearing of the doctrine in question upon the generations which have had a being since the existence of the visible church is not less awful; since it infers the perdition of all who have not been baptized, even if they have believed and adorned the Gospel. It infers the perdition, further, of the entire multitude of infants dying unbaptized, that is to say, of the vast majority of dying infants in every age. For it is over a very small proportion of the earth's surface that the visible church has extended, and it is, consequently, to a mere fraction of its teeming population that the baptismal rite can have been administered.

Whether there are any persons who can steadily contemplate these consequences and not shrink from the admission of them, I know not; but the bishop of London evidently is not of this class. Having in the earlier portion of his Sermons employed absolute and unqualified language, he subsequently introduces a qualifying term, and says that incorporation with the visible church is *generally* necessary to salvation (pp. 23, 48, *et al.*). The use of this term evidently betokens fear of the consequences which flow from holding the doctrine in its absolute form, and authorizes the conclusion that, as leading to these consequences, he cannot maintain it. It does not, however, render his position more tenable.

Necessity does not admit of degrees. More or less important, or beneficial, a thing may be; but not more or less necessary. Either it is necessary, or it is not. Whatever is really necessary cannot be dispensed with, on any occasion, or under any circumstances; if it can be so, then it is not necessary. When the bishop says that incorporation with the visible church is *generally* necessary to salvation, he admits that it is not necessary always. It is evidently, therefore, not necessary *to salvation*; since salvation may, in certain circumstances, be enjoyed without it. Its necessity, if any remain, is not to salvation, but to salvation in certain circumstances. Everything thus comes to depend on the nature of these circumstances, which ought to be clearly exhibited and defined; a process which has never been attempted, and which, if attempted, would constitute an entirely new argument. So far as the meaning intended by the phrase "generally necessary" can be made out, it seems to be that the services of The Church are necessary whenever they can be had; in other words, it is a mere plea for the employment of the clergy. If where incorporation into The Church is not possible it is not necessary, it would require nothing but the total disappearance of the clerical body to abolish the necessity altogether.

Let me now request the reader to retrace with me the ground over which we have gone together.

The doctrine which the bishop propounds is that "incorporation with The Church is necessary to salvation;" and he builds it upon a text from which he asserts it to be "an

unavoidable inference." We have examined this text, and found it to contain premises for an inference the very opposite of that which the bishop has drawn from it. We have also considered the doctrine in its general terms, and have arrived at the following results:—

First, That no such society exists on earth as that which he denominates The Church.

Secondly, That whatever society, so called, may exist on earth or elsewhere, he entirely mistakes the design and effect of it.

Thirdly, That no scope exists for the communication of such benefits as he affirms to result from connexion with it.

Fourthly, That the view he necessarily takes of the way of salvation is subversive of the Gospel of Christ.

And, fifthly, That his doctrine infers a condition of many holy men, and of the vast majority of dying babes, utterly incredible and impossible.

If the reader have not come with the writer to these conclusions, I can only commend my thoughts to his further consideration, and the whole subject to his serious inquiry.

I have now completed the examination I designed, without, I hope, anything displeasing to God, or justly offensive to man. Deeply momentous as the topics are to which I have had occasion to advert, I earnestly pray that God, in his mercy, will render the discussion of them useful to many, in leading them more clearly to discern "the truth as it is in Jesus."



## THE QUARTERLY REVIEW AND THE DISSENTERS.

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“Only let the assertion . . . be bold, decided, and dauntless, and many weak minds will acquiesce at once in the claim, and be as it were surety for its soundness.”—*Quarterly Review*.

A LATE number of the *Quarterly Review*\* contains many statements respecting Dissent and Dissenters which we feel to be incorrect and injurious. We are well aware that such misrepresentations are in perfect keeping with the character of the work in which they appear—if something more than usual, nothing more than we must expect; and that, on this ground, some persons whose judgment is entitled to great deference would think it better to let them pass unnoticed. But we cannot concur in this opinion. Silence is sometimes equivalent to acquiescence; and we are much mistaken if the present case is not one in which it would be thus regarded. We may fail, indeed, of subduing the unkindly spirit which is in action against us, and may even become unwillingly accessory to the mischiefs of the controversy—with which, however, those who have commenced it are more correctly chargeable: but the justice and sacredness of the cause with which we are identified, forbid us to afford even an indirect sanction to allegations which we can show to be unfounded.

This it is our purpose to attempt in reference to those now advanced; but, as the limits of a pamphlet will not allow us to remark upon more than the principal passages of the *Review*, we beg distinctly to be understood as by no means acknowledging the accuracy of the statements not specifically noticed in the present reply.

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\* No. 61, published in December, 1824. Art. xiv. *New Churches: Progress of Dissent*.

Attacks upon Dissenters have been very frequently made through the periodical press; a method which, by its impenetrable concealment, affords many advantages to the assailant, and increases the difficulty of the defence. But it is, perhaps, to a certain extent, a reciprocal advantage, when a writer thus takes an opportunity of saying what he ought not, and what for this reason he may be the less willing to avow, that he may be considered as disclaiming, because he renders impossible, those exercises of personal courtesy which might be elicited by a knowledge of his character. He gives his opponents leave to use the utmost severity to which the argument, exclusively considered, may lead. Himself unknown, nothing can be construed into personal disrespect.

The professed object of this reviewer\* is to defend the clergy of the Establishment from the charge of "negligence" and "inefficiency," which, it appears,† has been brought against them in consequence of the admitted "progress of Dissent." Now we have no desire, it would afford us no gratification, to censure the clergy; we should rejoice if every one of them were immaculate, and we do rejoice in the belief that they are becoming increasingly worthy of the high esteem so earnestly bespoken for them. Whatever we may think of the success of their present advocate, therefore, we shall pass his labours on this head without observation.

We must venture a few remarks, however, on the apologetical strain in which he speaks of the Establishment itself.

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\* "Whether, however, this increase of dissent is still progressive, or whether it has reached its utmost limit, our object is to show that it has been the natural consequence of circumstances over which the clergy, as a body, could have no control; *which*, as they could not counteract, is not to be imputed to them as a criminating charge; *which* lastly affords no argument against a national establishment for the maintenance of religion in a Christian country, as its apparent inefficiency in this respect arises *from* causes incidental to the peculiar manner in which our present church was formed, not *in* anything necessary to, or inseparably connected with, its nature" (Review, p. 231). Having had occasion to quote this passage, the italics of which *we* have marked, we beg our readers to notice the singularly inaccurate construction of it. The blunder committed in the position of the relative *which* in the second and third clauses, makes them mean absolutely nothing. Now we are on the subject, we may add that the whole article abounds with inelegant and incorrect phraseology, and ill-constructed sentences. All this, we are aware, is of very little consequence to the argument; but when a man who can write well does not, it is a pretty sure indication that his ideas are confused, and his reasonings embarrassed.

† Review, p. 230.

Some sensible and pious persons have expressed themselves as though, in their opinion, it was incapable of improvement;\* but the present writer, though a high churchman, and by no means "evangelical," is not of this number. "We should be the last to assert," says he,† "that our church is perfect, that it has not its evils and inconveniences." In truth, in defending the clergy he has been obliged to acknowledge the deficiencies of the church. Almost at the outset‡ he confesses its "apparent inefficiency" to prevent the progress of Dissent, or (which is the same thing) to provide acceptably and effectually for the religious instruction of the people; an "inefficiency," too, which, though he calls it "apparent," he acknowledges to be *real*, by ascribing it not to an "apparent," but a real cause, viz., "the peculiar manner in which our present church was formed." And yet he adds, nay, "confidently affirms," "that it is most admirably adapted to the circumstances of the country."§ He "would safely," he says—*willingly*, perhaps; but how *safely* it is not for him to say—"rest its defence on its utility."||

This defence of the church is remarkable. Much used to be said respecting the *divine right* of establishments generally, and of the English in particular. This argument, however, the reviewer does not employ; and, by the contemptuous manner in which he speaks of the "divine right of presbytery,"¶ it may be presumed he abandons it as untenable. The present defence is "utility." There is one point to be determined, however, before the consideration of utility can be allowed to have any weight; we mean the *authority* of church establishments. To recommend a certain religious institution to us, we are told it is useful: but we ask, Is it lawful? And we ask this question, because it appears to us that the Lord Jesus Christ, of his church the supreme and sovereign Head, claims the direction of all the affairs of his kingdom, and of the methods by which its advancement should be sought. A reference to the New Testament will clearly show that he has sanctioned some, and forbidden others (John xviii. 36; Matt. xxvi. 52, xxviii. 19; 2 Cor. x. 4). If, then, we are entitled to ask, Is it lawful?

\* "I am quite persuaded that we want no changes in the church."—Induction Sermon at Islington, by the Rev. Daniel Wilson, M.A., p. 29.

† Review, p. 252.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 253.

¶ *Ibid.*, p. 250.

—and, if it be thought we are not, it is here the argument should be arrested, and turned to the decision of that point—what answer can be given respecting the formation of national churches? In what precept of our divine Redeemer do they originate? What sanction do they gain from apostolical practice? What countenance from the New Testament history? Or what reply can be made in their behalf to such passages of Scripture as these? “My kingdom is not of this world. Call no man your father upon the earth; neither be ye called masters, for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men: which things have, indeed, a show of wisdom in will worship. Take heed what ye hear. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God. Stand fast in the liberty where-with Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (John xviii. 36; Matt. xxiii. 8–10, xv. 9; Col. ii. 23; Mark iv. 24; 1 Thess. v. 21; 1 John iv. 1; Gal. v. 1). Can it still be pleaded for as *lawful* to introduce human authority into Christ’s kingdom; to identify the church and the state; to form a pretended Christian hierarchy; to constitute the king head of the church; “to decree rites and ceremonies,” and, under pretence of “legitimate ordination” and the claims of “appointed teachers,” to reduce whole nations to religious bondage? And, if the lawfulness of a scheme be negatived, no other question can be asked; that which is unlawful may not be done, even with the best design. We may go farther, and affirm that what is unlawful cannot be useful, or Christ would not have forbidden it.

We should entertain no fear, however, in prosecuting the inquiry, Whether the Church Establishment in this country, or such institutions generally, can be defended on the ground of utility. With reference to the only branch of the argument to which the reviewer has referred,\* “the preservation of orthodox opinions,” we may say that nothing could be more unfortunate. “The gradual declension of the old Presbyterian congregations” to Arianism and Socinianism is incorrectly placed to the account of Dissent. Although not

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\* Review, p. 253.

established in England, and, in the instances referred to, possessing now little if anything more than the name, Presbyterianism is essentially of the nature of an establishment; and is founded, not on the principles of dissent, but on those of the national church, the differences being merely circumstantial and subordinate. All that has occurred to Presbyterian congregations, therefore, may be regarded as having happened to an establishment. And, to whatever extent it may have been otherwise, it is clearly to the honour of the dissenting system that it has secured the preservation of truth in defiance of this declension; an assertion sufficiently proved by the fact, that in many instances large numbers have withdrawn for the maintenance of sound doctrine, leaving generally a minority, and often a small remnant, in possession of the property by which alone the congregations in question are kept in existence. At all events, the Church of England affords but a melancholy illustration of the efficacy of establishments to preserve "orthodox opinions." They have remained, indeed, in her articles (and, if they had not, they would have been quite as safe in the Bible) while rejected by a large proportion of her clergy; much boasted of, but little used. Yet the actual state of the British establishments in respect of sound doctrine is better than that of any other in the world, as a comparison of them with those of the continent would sufficiently prove. And for what reason? but because private judgment has been exercised, or, in other words, Dissenters have abounded, more in these kingdoms than in any other country where similar institutions exist. The truth is, that this dissenting principle affords the only security for the preservation of scriptural sentiments in any other form than that of a dead letter; and this is a security for their living exhibition as long as there is any true religion in the world. By this, and this alone, were they preserved in the valleys of Piedmont during the dark ages of Popery; and in England, both amidst the fitful struggles of the Reformation, and the deathlike torpidity of the last century: and thus has been kept burning that torch of truth by which, in many cases, the altars of the Establishment are now again illuminated, and her ministers awakened to propagate "the spirit and power" of her "orthodox opinions."

We will only add, that we conceive the reviewer to be



quite in an error, when he states himself\* to "have no doubt whatever" that the Establishment "is considered by the Dissenters themselves as absolutely necessary to the maintenance of true religion in this country." We, certainly, entertain no such opinion. Not that we are blind to the immediate diminution of the means of public instruction which would ensue from its fall, but we feel assured that it would be only temporary. All that now exists of Christian knowledge, benevolence, and zeal, whether in the church or out of it, would still exist in undiminished activity; and they would come into operation with greater energy and effect in proportion to the urgency of the occasion, and the rejoicing vigour of their emancipated powers. But, at whatever amount this evil may be estimated, it cannot affect the question before us. The whole importance of the Church Establishment in this country is adventitious, the result of its own existence. An institution of whatever nature exercising a powerful influence on society through many centuries cannot be unimportant, since it forms the national habits and character. It is thus that the Church has become important. It has engaged feelings of undefined attachment and veneration, which give undoubted facilities to the beneficial—and equal facilities, alas! to the mischievous—activity of its ministers. But its essential value is to be tried, not by a reference to the artificial state of things which itself has produced, but by the application of its principles and machinery to society not as yet acted upon by such influence. Contemplate the first national establishment of Christianity. We are well aware, indeed, that the lovers of such systems dwell with fond congratulation upon the declaration of Constantine that "Christianity was the religion of the Roman empire," and assign it the first rank among the triumphs of the cross; but we have yet to learn that, in its influence on the purity, the spirituality, and the sincerity, of the Christian profession, true religion has ever suffered a calamity of equal magnitude. Without saying that we wish for the destruction of existing establishments—would to God they were pervaded in every part by a living and effective piety!—we certainly should rejoice to behold the world in the state to which it would have been brought, if the spirit of love and zeal

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\* Review, p. 253.

which achieved the triumphs of the first three centuries had been allowed to operate through the fifteen hundred years which have succeeded, only unchecked and unpolluted by the secularizing and unhallowed influence of the system. Where then had been Popery, with all its concomitant and consequent mischiefs? Or the reliance upon names and forms which, at this day, in the most religious of all countries, ruins so many thousands, and presents one of the most melancholy obstacles to the diffusion of divine knowledge? Should we, as now, have had to look back on more than a fourth of the world's entire duration, while blessed, too, with the most eminent religious advantages, as a period during a great part of which divine truth was almost totally obscured, and sincere piety well-nigh exterminated; and even at the close of which, after all that has been so nobly accomplished, it may be questioned whether there is so much true religion in the world as there was at its commencement? We need not be reminded that other causes have been in operation, nor are we unprepared for the smile of incredulity with which this representation may, perchance, in some quarters be received; but we fearlessly express our conviction, and challenge proof of our error, that the national establishment of Christianity possesses a melancholy pre-eminence among the obstacles to its progress, and the causes of its decay.

But that which we have more particularly to notice is the manner in which the reviewer, in defending the clergy of the Establishment, has spoken of Dissent and Dissenters. In this part of his task, which was doubtless delicate, he professes to "discuss the principles of different systems, not the acts of individuals;"\* and he informs us that he has "endeavoured" to do this in the exercise of a "spirit of charity," and "with perfect impartiality."† We should have been happy if his endeavours had been more successful; but, however imperfectly achieved, we honour the design; and, if we have to point out some instances in which we think he has failed of correct representation, sound reasoning, and Christian charity, we wish, in our turn, to be at the utmost remove from morbid irritability, or captious censure.

We begin with the passage in which the reviewer describes the "unequal strife" between a sectary who enters a parish

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\* Review, p. 231.† *Ibid.*, p. 252.

and the rector, who, with all the real advantage in argument, is represented as most undeservedly beaten through sheer excess of liberality and meekness.\* The case supposed is plainly that of a spot where, in the opinion of the sectary, the Gospel is not preached. Whether his opinion be right or wrong does not affect the question; on either supposition, if he is sincere, it is an argument equally powerful, both for him to speak, and for the people to listen; and this, by the reviewer's account, is the sum of what he advances. The rector comes forward to persuade his parishioners not to hear this new preacher; but, according to the same authority, he cannot exhibit any "broad or strongly traced line of demarcation," or any "clear and definite" "points of difference." For instance, he cannot say, This is a man of ungodly life—if you look into your Bible, you will find he is leading you into error—his "claims" are "extravagant," or "enthusiastic"—he will seduce you into the "terrors" of "fanaticism"—nor even, You will find the same Gospel at the church. He "*can but* insist on respect and attachment to ancient insti-

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\* "It is in every respect an unequal strife; on the one side, the appeal is to the passions and conceit; on the other, to sober reason. However ignorant, however erroneous, the dissenting teacher, it is a task of no slight difficulty to the mild and affectionate, though zealous, pastor, to eradicate his influence, or invalidate his authority. The minds of the poor and illiterate are only to be moved by strong and vehement language; they do not comprehend nice and subtle distinctions; the line of demarcation must be broad and strongly traced; the points of difference must be clear and definite. The exclusive system promises largely, and denounces peremptorily. The dogmatic assertion of superior knowledge of God's counsels, of peculiar sanctity, or, in many cases, of actual sensible intercourse with the Deity, goes directly home to the understanding—alarms, and awes. The clergyman, especially if the invader of his province be in other respects a good and devout man, can but insist on respect and attachment to ancient institutions; the sin of schism, a topic of all others the most difficult to define and make comprehensible to the uneducated; legitimate ordination, and the power of administering the sacraments conferred on the clergy: feeble and uninteresting topics when compared with the dauntless assertion of his ignorance or dislike of the Gospel, denounced on the other side; or, perhaps, the extravagant claims of the wildest enthusiasm, the relentless terrors of the most gloomy fanaticism. Thus that very charity which proves the clergyman to possess more real practical knowledge of the Scripture, his conscientious horror of infringing in the least on the great commandment which forbids to 'bear false witness,' are his strongest impediments in the contest; while he is 'spoken against' in language disparaging, contemptuous, or superciliously compassionate, his only recrimination can be what scarcely reaches the understanding, or touches the pride-hardened heart, temperate argument and affectionate expostulation."—Review, p. 241.

tutions; the sin of schism, a topic of all others the most difficult to define and make comprehensible to the uneducated; legitimate ordination; and the power of administering the sacraments conferred on the clergy: feeble and uninteresting topics," the reviewer most justly says, in comparison. An "unequal strife," indeed! "For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever" (Psalm xlix. 8). But is this all? Are there no arguments behind, depending less upon "nice and subtle distinctions," and coming directly home to every man's understanding and feelings? It may be presumed, indeed, that this is all the reviewer would think justifiable; and this, too, in the style of "temperate argument and affectionate expostulation." But, to say nothing of cases in which even this is attended with some little asperity, is he ignorant of others in which the participation of charitable donations, and parochial benefits, is suspended on the decision; and ejection, privation, and poverty, with other "miserable grievances" (to use the reviewer's term, in a sense far more correct than that in which he employs it), are made to stare him in the face if ever he enters "the conventicle"? But still it is an "unequal strife:" "for what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark viii. 36.)

The intruder, however, has to answer for the crime of pretending—it can be nothing but pretence—to be wiser, or better, or happier, than his neighbours; together with the additional and more heinous crime of wishing to make them as wise and as happy as himself. "The assertion of exclusive spiritual privileges," we are told, "is the principle of sectarianism:"\* a sentence which, we will frankly confess, we read several times before we could believe in its real existence, and more especially in its having been written by this reviewer; nor has our astonishment yet ceased. The sectarian doctrine notoriously is, that it matters little, in comparison very little, of what party you are, if you are a Christian indeed. In proof of this assertion we need no other witness than our assailant himself, whose testimony we hope will be considered altogether unquestionable. Mark, then, the following statement, which he quotes from a clergyman lately deceased, as "undeniably true."† "The

\* Review, p. 240.

† *Ibid.*, p. 231.



Dissenters . . . do not fill their ranks upon the principle of hostility, but of INDIFFERENCE . . . If you ask a common person why he prefers the dissenting chapel to the church, he tells you that he knows of *no difference* between them; that it is *more convenient in point of time, or more commodious in point of room:*" which turn out at last to be the "exclusive privileges" claimed by the sectaries. We are willing to admit, on the one hand, that individual Dissenters may imbibe too much of the spirit thus falsely ascribed to their system, and, on the other, that individual Churchmen may be eminently free from it; but, whatever may be its criminality (and, by the force with which it is alleged against dissent, in the eyes of the reviewer it must certainly be great), "the assertion of exclusive spiritual privileges is THE PRINCIPLE" of all establishments. To say nothing of the Papal church, which allows salvation to none out of its pale, this writer himself bears witness against the English establishment, when he speaks of "the *sin* of schism, *legitimate* ordination, and the power of administering the sacraments *conferred on the clergy.*" Upon this subject, however, we beg to introduce another unexceptionable witness, in the person of the right reverend Richard Mant, D.D., lord bishop of Down and Connor. "When, relying upon these promises," says his lordship, "and upon the assurance that he is faithful who promised, we profess our unshaken belief that those persons who persevere in conscientious communion with the church are in the sure road to salvation, we are not to be understood as delivering an opinion that salvation will be withheld from those who conscientiously separate from the church. God forbid that we should presume to set bounds to the infinite mercy of God! Thus much, however, I conceive that I may *safely* say, that *no promise of salvation appears to be given in Scripture to those persons who are not in the church.* The free mercy of God will, *perhaps*, make that sacrament effectual which is *administered by a layman, or an irregularly ordained minister.* Salvation will, *perhaps*, be freely extended to those persons who do not seek it by persevering in communion with the church."\* The reviewer will doubtless thank us for exhibiting so fine an illustration

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\* Sermons for Parochial and Domestic Use. By Richard Mant, M.A. Second Edition. Vol. II., pp. 321, 322.



of "the superior liberality of opinion professed" "by the clergy of the Establishment."\*

"The sin of schism" having been referred to as necessarily committed† by every man who leaves his parish church, and being a sin much talked of and tremendously magnified, it may not be amiss to inquire a little into its nature and enormity. What is schism? Oh! says the reviewer, in answer to this distressing question, make no inquiries; it is "a topic of all others the most difficult to be defined, and made comprehensible to the uneducated."‡ We are quite aware how much a university education facilitates the understanding of this and some other mysteries; yet even "the uneducated" should be effectually guarded against every sin, and more especially against one which is arrayed in "terrors" at least as "relentless" as those of "the most gloomy fanaticism;" and how can it be avoided if its nature be not known? Will none of the learned bestow their charity upon their uneducated neighbours, and seriously try at least to make the sin of schism comprehensible? Or, if they do not, why should we yield to a spirit so truly fanatical as to be terrified at what we do not comprehend? The whole statement, however, is a fiction. Our Maker has not shrouded in such mystery as this anything which it is important for us to know. The *ecclesiastical* sin of schism, indeed, it may be difficult to define, and impossible to make comprehensible to any man of common sense; nor, we apprehend, do ecclesiastical persons generally either understand it themselves, or wish it to be understood by others. It is enough that a strange and unmeaning term should be associated in the popular mind with certain undefined ideas of crime and terror; since it thus becomes an admirable instrument for keeping the ignorant in awe. But this ecclesiastical spectre, retained so carefully in aisles and cloisters, and from thence exercising so fearful an influence on the imaginations of men who have never seen it, like all other ghosts, will be found on a resolute scrutiny to consist of a huge and very harmless shadow,

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\* Review, p. 240.

† "And as, in deserting your regular minister," "the clergyman of the parish in which you reside," "you would be guilty of disobedience to Christ . . . so would you be guilty of the *sin of SCHISM*."—*Village Sermons*. By the Rev. Edward Berens, Vicar of the parishes of Shrivenham and Englefield, Berks. Vol. I., pp. 190, 193. First Edition.

‡ Review, p. 241.

and a small and very ordinary substance. Let this Greek word be translated, and its real terrors be summoned to the day. What is the meaning of *σχίσμα*, schisma? A *rent*, as of a garment; implying an existing union, and indicating an interruption of it. In its metaphorical use its meaning is, *alienation, discord*: still a *breach of existing union*—of that, namely, which is formed by the exercise of mutual affection. The word has properly no other sense. Now, the question is, In which sense is it to be understood when applied to the church of Christ? To answer this, let us again inquire, What kind of union subsists in that body? Surely no union of ceremonies and ecclesiastical systems; since, besides those members of it that are in heaven, it comprehends individuals of various sects on earth. Nothing unites the members of the church of Christ, as such, but the exercise of Christian love; of no other union, therefore, can any interruption arise; or, in other words, there cannot be schism in the church in any sense but that of *discord*. This, indeed, is a sin; and, like every other sin, if indulged, will prove a “deadly,” or damning, one; but it can never be associated with any extraordinary guilt, or punishment. It is, moreover, a sin not necessarily involved in separating from an established, or from any other, church; since such a step *may* be taken without any interruption of brotherly love, while persons within the same pale—witness the orthodox and the evangelical parties in the Church of England—may drink deeply into a schismatical spirit.

If the justice of our interpretation be disputed, it must be by referring the word schism to an ecclesiastical platform erected by professing Christians; in which case a person may be held guilty of schism, or division, who departs from that communion. But there are weighty objections to this proceeding. In the first place, schism would thus be reduced from a sin against THE church of Christ, to an offence against A church; which is not its scriptural aspect. The union which we are called upon to preserve respects the *whole* church, according to our Lord’s prayer (John xvii. 21), “that they ALL may be one;” and this union cannot be interrupted by anything which does not respect the whole church, as every degree of disaffection, though shown to a single member, really does; while separation from a particular church as to its externals, conducted in a spirit of

love, is no offence against the whole body at all, love being the fulfilling of the law. In this respect the church of Rome is the most consistent—she alone is at all consistent—in bringing against separatists the charge of schism, for she does maintain herself to be THE holy catholic, or *universal* church. Will the Church of England make equal pretensions? Secondly, this interpretation requires a standard of appeal, by which it may be determined what a church of Christ is. We surely are not bound to concede this to every body of persons who may assume it: and, if not, we are all thrown upon the exercise of our own judgment, and alike precluded from this ungracious crimination, as from the assumption on which it proceeds. Thirdly, this interpretation would create a new order of sins; erecting into crimes the errors of the understanding, for which, as far as purely such, even the Almighty holds no man responsible; and not its errors alone, but its most correct and beneficial exercises, the very discoveries of truth. Or, if there be any disposition entering into the sin, it is that most virtuous and noble one which constrains us to embrace all the truth we discern. Fourthly, such an interpretation would give a melancholy stability and perpetuity to error. It would make reformation of the grossest ecclesiastical corruption impossible; and, if it is contended for by the Church of England, she brands herself with infamy as a schismatic from the first, and for centuries the only, established form of Christianity in the world. Let her cleanse herself from sin, if such it be, before she casts a stone at those who have but followed her example.\*

After all, is not every man at liberty to judge for himself in matters of religion? What has any rector to say to his

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\* It is with great pleasure we refer to the right reverend Herbert Marsh, D.D., lord bishop of Peterborough, in connexion with the view here taken of the subject of schism. "There cannot be a doubt," says his lordship, "that they who object to the doctrine or discipline of the Established Church have a *right* to secede from it; and, moreover, that this right is founded on the same principle as that by which the Church of England seceded from the church of Rome." "*There is no sin*, therefore, in separation from an established church, when the plea of conscience can be urged." "To maintain that every dissenter from the Established Church is guilty of sin, would be . . . equally monstrous and uncharitable."—*Comparative View of the Churches of England and Rome*, pp. 173, 268. The whole of note C in the Appendix does the bishop the highest honour, and cannot be too strongly recommended to the reviewer, to Mr. Berens, and to all high churchmen.

parishioners more than this:—"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they be of God"? (1 John iv. 1.) Aware of the force of this appeal, the reviewer says, "We willingly concede to the Dissenters the having clearly proved the political right of exercising free judgment in matters of religion; but the moral expediency of assuming and acting upon this right is quite another question."\* It is so; but this, let it be observed, is not the ground on which he had been attacking it. He had just asserted the exercise of this right to be, not inexpedient merely, but wrong; a sin—nay, the dreadful sin of schism; a charge which it now appears cannot be supported, himself being judge. He thinks it, however, generally inexpedient; and that "it can only be rationally advised on the principle that all are so far advanced in religious knowledge, so unbiassed by prejudice, so uninfluenced by caprice, so entirely independent and abstracted from all extraneous and less spiritual motives, as to pass a calm, sober, and dispassionate judgment."† Now, while we fully admit the value of all these qualities, together with the wisdom of "humility and self-distrust"—those "unfashionable" graces, it appears, in the circle of the reviewer's acquaintance (which, we suspect, does not lie much among Dissenters)—we apprehend that comparatively few, on this plan, would ever be competent to decide on the merits of the principles in question; and, as there is no neutral ground, as every man must be, because he will be called, either a Churchman or a Dissenter, it follows that these two great parties would be formed by blind impulse and groundless prejudice, without even an attempt to bring the understanding into exercise at all. But, supposing it were necessary to come to the subject absolutely unbiassed, how would the reviewer attain this object? Truly, by having everybody left in the bosom of the church till the affections and prejudices are all engaged in its favour, and the mind impressed with a conviction that everything said against it must be both futile and wicked; and this is that impartial and independent state of mind, in which the writer would have the merits of ecclesiastical systems adjudged. The chief value of this nostrum for avoiding the effects of human depravity, however, lies here—that, if admitted, it would require the

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\* Review, p. 242.

† *Ibid.*, p. 242.



erection of another tribunal, to decide *when* a man was qualified to judge for himself; an office which, of course, could be intrusted to none so competent as the national hierarchy. And thus would our attempts to gain intellectual liberty be once more baffled, and the exercise of private judgment be prevented, by a bondage as inexorable as that of the Holy Inquisition itself. Papists themselves demand no more.

After quoting some admirable sentiments of Bishop Horsley, however, the tone of the reviewer is lowered almost, we think, to self-contradiction. "All that we require," says he, "is, that the exertion of *the best faculties the individual may possess* . . . be preliminary to the selection of the teacher;"\* a sentiment in which we fully concur. And yet immediately after this he makes a desperate attempt to frighten his readers from such an exercise of their faculties, unless great "previous diligence in *acquiring religious knowledge* has been shown. Where the *time*, or the *will*, or the *CAPACITY*, of *self-improvement* is wanting," he adds, "it is far better for the poor man to sit and listen to his appointed teacher, than erect himself into a judge of religious controversy. With the privilege of thinking for himself in these matters," this writer continues, "the consequence of answering for himself is inseparably connected; answering, we mean, for the full and impartial consideration of the subjects in dispute, as far as his ability extends."† To all of which we reply, first, that the reviewer has already sanctioned every man in deciding by the "exertion of the best faculties" he "may possess." Secondly, that a poor man may select his teacher without meddling with any perplexing religious controversy. For judging of the grand controversy, whether in the church or out of it, respecting the vital truths of the Gospel, the Bible furnishes him with sufficient and most simple materials; and it is both sinful and unsafe to listen to any, not excepting "his appointed teacher," without bringing all he hears to this unerring test. Thirdly, that whatever use a man may make of "the privilege of thinking for himself," "the consequence of answering for himself" cannot be avoided; and of answering, too, "for the full and impartial consideration of the subjects in dispute, as far as

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\* Review, p. 243.

† *Ibid.*, p. 243.



his ability extends." In this reference of the reviewer there is something very melancholy and appalling. We know that the church of Rome professes to be answerable for the salvation of all its members; and the extreme deference required to "appointed teachers," with occasional intimations that those who keep to their church can scarcely be wrong,\* and some other symptoms, have sometimes induced a suspicion, though it was too painful to be indulged, that the same principle still lurked within the bosom of the reformed and Protestant Church of England. However this may be, by this writer, at least, it is avowed; for his language is clearly equivalent to this: Resign "the privilege of thinking for" yourselves, and we will exonerate you from "the consequence of answering for yourselves." "So then," says this apostolic church, according to this interpreter of her sentiments, but in direct opposition to the apostle himself, "every one of us shall" NOT "give an account of *himself* to God" (Rom. xiv. 12). It is well for the Church that, as a body, she can have no representative upon whom this awful load of responsibility may rest. It will fall, alas! too heavily, on the deluded creatures who, having failed to use their privilege, must account for it as a talent buried in the earth, and in the character of unprofitable servants; and yet more heavily on those less deluded and more criminal individuals, who, to maintain the influence of church establishments, have encouraged so fatal an expectation.

There is a charge brought against the system of dissent, however, which, if it could be substantiated, would be more to the reviewer's purpose than all that has yet been advanced. It is "the dissenting principle," it seems, "to accommodate their doctrines to the humour and prejudices of their hearers"† "This," it is said, "is one of the great evils of the sectarianism of the day. The preacher is perpetually tempted to abandon the bold vantage ground of truth, to conciliate his audience, and flatter their prejudices, on which his maintenance depends; he is not in any respect an inde-

\* "A man who keeps steadfast to the form of sound words which he has been taught; who lives in quiet submission to the church in which he has been baptized and brought up, is in little danger of being led into error; and if he should err, much allowance is to be made for him."—Village Sermons. By the Rev. Edward Berens. Vol. I., p. 200. First Edition.

† Review, p. 239.

pendent teacher of religion, but a stipendiary expositor of the opinions of his hearers.”\* We are quite willing, and, indeed, pleased, to observe, that in this passage the reviewer has carefully spoken, not of men, but of principles; and yet it might be expected that, if the tendency of the dissenting system be such and so powerful, its influence would be extensively discernible in those who embrace it. Now we make an appeal to facts with the utmost cheerfulness. By our fruits let both ourselves and our principles be known. Will any observer of the dissenting ministry affirm that his experience agrees with the reviewer’s theory? If there be such a man, we challenge him to produce the facts which authorize him to do so. We wish no concealment; let our delinquency be proclaimed in the face of the world. We are confident that there is not a body of religious instructors in existence to whom the odious charge is less applicable; nor can we be expected to resign our opinion till it is disproved.

We beg to say a word, also, not of the members, but of the principles of religious establishments. Their ministers are, unquestionably, not placed in any supposable subjection to the opinions of their flock. But popular feeling is not the only thing in the world to which men have been known to accommodate themselves, and national churches are certainly capable of exercising some little influence on the clergy. They comprehend ecclesiastical superiors, of exalted rank and extensive patronage; and, even in this worst paid of all professions,† “some prizes,” objects of clerical ambition, which, it is well known, are much more easily won by subserviency than by independence, and by no species of subserviency more certainly than by that to which the reviewer so zealously devotes himself. However magnanimous the conduct of the clergy may be (and there are cases in which it really is so), the system appears but too well adapted to induce a spirit of adulation and servility; a habit of consulting, not the Oracles of truth, but the sentiments of their superiors, and a perpetual reference to their interest rather than their duty: in a word, “to render them in no respect,” save that they may disregard the welfare of their charge, “independent teachers of religion, but stipendiary expositors of the opinions of their” patrons. It appears,

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\* Review, p. 238.† *Ibid.*, p. 237.

therefore, that the evil of which the reviewer complains is not peculiar to dissent, though it is as affecting that system alone that he complains of it. We may safely add, that, considering the nature of the influence exercised, and the amount of inducements exhibited, so well adapted to allure away from us all men of no principle, the Dissenters are unspeakably more likely to possess a faithful and unaccommodating ministry than the Establishment. And yet it is by this advocate of church patronage that dissent is charged with the monopoly of "the great evil" in question; while he claims the merit, too, of balancing the systems "with perfect impartiality"!

But the point under discussion is closely connected with another of no inconsiderable moment. "The great evil" which the reviewer deplures arises necessarily and essentially out of the fact of a minister's being chosen by his flock; the abolition of which practice would, of course, in his judgment, be the most desirable, and the only effectual, remedy. He must be considered, therefore, as aiming a blow at the system; since that which is essentially mischievous must be fundamentally wrong, and ought on all hands to be abandoned. There is a little, however—just a word or two—to be said by the Dissenters, before this privilege can be surrendered. The reviewer himself has admitted that it is every man's right, and we may add that it is every man's duty, to judge for himself in matters of religion; it must, therefore, be equally his right and his duty to seek such instruction as accords with his view of divine truth—that is, to select his own teacher. We should suggest, further, that, if we have not a right to choose our teachers, somewhere there must be a right to appoint them; but where is this, and in whom? Is it in the Church of England? Even our assailant does not pretend to such a thing, since he abandons the divine right of that church, and rests its defence on its utility. And, if not in his own church, it doubtless matters not much to him where else it may be. To us it is a consolation to know that there is no man, or body of men, in whom it can be shown to be vested by any competent authority; and, if no man possesses a right to appoint our religious instructors, who can reasonably rebuke us for choosing our own?

The reviewer would, perhaps, say, that he concedes the

right, but questions the expediency of acting upon it. Let it be observed, however, that, if the right be conceded, the charge of necessary evil tendency must be abandoned; for what is right cannot be essentially mischievous. And for its expediency, as far as its influence on the ministry is concerned (and this is the only evil imputed to it), we have seen that it has greatly the advantage over the system of church patronage. But, suppose we should wish to oblige this very complimentary writer by resigning our privilege; we could not do it without just inquiring who is to appoint our ministers, and what kind of men are likely to be set over us. What security will be given us that they shall be men "well instructed in the mysteries of the kingdom" of heaven, and devoted to the welfare of their flock? men who, while they do not stoop to us, shall not cringe to their patrons; who, while they disregard our humours and prejudices, shall care tenderly for our souls? What security that the clerical profession, ill paid as it is, shall not be regarded merely as a source of emolument, or an avenue of promotion; as an heirloom of the noble and the wealthy, a provision for younger sons, or an instrument of political intrigue; or even as a depository for the lumber of the country, a last resource for those who are either too stupid or too idle to work? What security, in a word, that we shall not be placed under clergymen both ignorant and negligent, in separation from whom, and the renewed selection of our own teachers, we shall find at last the only hope of spiritual edification? It would require something more than we have yet heard to convince us of the expediency of opening the way for such a state of things as this; and, at all events, the actual appointments in the Church of England afford little encouragement to intrust to her hands so momentous a concern. It will still, therefore, be more expedient for us, and sanctioned by the highest authority, to "take heed what," and whom, we "hear;" to "prove all things," and "hold fast that which is good" (Mark iv. 24; 1 Thess. v. 21).

Next to the "sin of schism," the charge of "proselytism" is brought against Dissenters with, perhaps, the most bitter and melancholy tone. "Dissent," it is affirmed, is a "system of proselytism;"\* and its "life blood is detraction

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\* Review, p. 233.



from the labours of the established clergy.”\* It is plain, however, that the latter of these assertions is true only in part. There are some of the clergy whose labours the Dissenters are far from depreciating; on the contrary, by almost the whole body they are held in the highest honour, and uniformly spoken of in terms of cordial and almost unmeasured eulogy. If there are others of whose ministerial instructions Dissenters do not speak with equal approbation, it is obviously not because they are clergymen, but because there is some difference in the nature of those instructions themselves. In fact, it is well known that, between the Dissenters generally and that large portion of the clergy called orthodox, there is a wide diversity of religious opinion, perhaps on essential points; while between them and the clergy known as evangelical, together with many differences, on certain points acknowledged on all hands to be of the utmost importance there is a close agreement. And into this difference of opinion the whole of the grievous “detraction” of the clergy is to be resolved. There are some of that body by whom the generality of Dissenters think the Gospel is not preached. This may be a mistake, but let the decision of that question be reserved to “the judgment of the great day;” all that we have now to do with is the fact, and the fact being so, what do these members of the Establishment expect from us? The suppression of our conscientious convictions? The speaking of what we believe to be error as though we thought it was truth? In one word, then, hypocrisy and falsehood! according to our proficiency in which most amiable arts, it seems, we shall rise in the esteem of the orthodox clergy. But why is the avowal of our sentiments called “detraction”? Our error, if it be one, lies in the judgment, not in the affections; it implies no malevolence, no wish to depreciate. We are not only willing, but desirous, to “honour all men” to the full amount required by either character or station; but, if nothing will satisfy these “appointed teachers” but an unbounded deference to their religious opinions, and an abandonment of those whom we apprehend to be perishing in their hands, we give up the attempt.

But we make proselytes. In other words, we aim at the

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\* Review, p. 240.



conversion of sinners, we seek the salvation of souls. We challenge the reviewer to prove that any dishonourable means are employed to induce persons to enter our societies, or to retain them there. All who attend our worship come voluntarily; they hear only that which is conceived to be adapted to their spiritual benefit; and such further union as they may wish to form with us, if of approved character, is encouraged. What have we done more? Have we told the rich that it is disreputable to attend the church, or the poor that if they come to meeting they shall find it for their worldly advantage? Have we threatened those who leave us that they shall have no recommendation to public charities; or terrified an afflicted family by intimating that, if the clergyman should visit them, they must expect us no more? The reviewer knows very well that *we* have no weapons for such warfare as this; and, if we had, our principles would forbid us to employ them. Have we, then, shown ourselves more anxious to instruct men in the principles of dissent than in the truths of the Gospel? The reviewer himself bears witness to the contrary, and states it to be "undeniable" that we fill our assemblies on the ground of "*indifference*" to everything which distinguishes the established and dissenting systems of ecclesiastical government. This, then, is the whole charge of proselytism: we seek to convert ungodly men, and we encourage just so much connexion with our body as persons of approved character may be led voluntarily to desire. And what can we do less? Or upon what principle can our conduct be complained of, but one which would equally deny both the expediency and the right of private judgment in religious matters; and forbid the reception of Dissenters, so warmly welcomed, into the Establishment? Still, those who become Dissenters were once Churchmen. They were so; but, as we have just seen, on the one hand, that the Dissenters have done nothing blameworthy to induce the change, so, on the other, Churchmen cannot be accused of any crime in making it, since they act upon their acknowledged right of private judgment, on the expediency of which merely there is any question between them and the reviewer. To the implied sentiment, however, that church-people, as such, should be excluded from the scope of dissenting zeal, we reply, that ungodly men ought not to be left alone anywhere, or upon any con-

sideration. Let the Church of England regard as her own such persons only as, in the judgment of a scriptural charity, may be held to be Christians indeed, and her enclosure will be instantly freed from the unpleasing intrusion; or let her acknowledge that the importance of pure and undefiled religion infinitely transcends the value of names and forms, and she will learn to thank Dissenters for their labours: at present she claims all who are not avowedly Dissenters, and among them, unquestionably, multitudes of thoughtless and irreligious persons; and it is far too much to expect us to leave these our fellow-immortals to perish without attempting their rescue, even though charges of bigotry, uncharitableness, and proselytism, be added to the "uncleanly missiles"\* amidst "the pelting" of which our endeavours must be made. We know not how to believe that even this reviewer would be more gratified that men should sink into perdition under the name of Churchmen, than that they should be saved by the instrumentality of Dissenters.

Besides the topics we have thus distinctly noticed, there are several passages which may be classed together under the head of fictions, either mixed or pure; creditable, indeed, to the ingenuity of the reviewer, but indicating an entire ignorance of the state and character of Dissenters. Thus, when he speaks of "the interested spirit of pecuniary speculation," and the large interest paid on what he calls "tabernacle bonds,"† the statement is altogether incorrect; the very contrary is the fact. The money is generally considered as almost lost at the very time time it is advanced, and it is seldom that either principal or interest is secured. But,

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\* Review, p. 250.

† "But it is unquestionable that, in many places, the clergy have not only to compete with the fair opposition of religious zeal and activity, but with the interested spirit of pecuniary speculation. In many towns the dissenting meeting involves considerations at least as worldly as spiritual. The secure payment of a large interest for the capital vested, makes the letting of pews, and, of course, the increase and maintenance of the congregation, not merely an object of importance as far as the advancement of what is sincerely believed to be the pure worship of God, or even the prosperity of the peculiar sect [is concerned], but as a source of income to the individuals who have advanced the money. Though not actually in the market with Mexican and Columbian scrip, tabernacle bonds are with many as good security, and bear as high a premium as any other medium of exchange. But this consolidation of interest with religious zeal (especially where the leaders of the secession are persons of wealth and influence, master manufacturers, or in wholesale trade, pos-

even if this were the case, it could not be imputed to us by this reviewer as a crime, since it is the very system now acted upon in the Establishment, under the highest ecclesiastical and parliamentary sanction.

To the same class may be referred the exhibition of the dissenting ministry as "an excellent speculation."\* To which it may be replied, first, that there is no reason why any man should decline a situation of usefulness and respectability for which he is considered qualified by the parties immediately concerned. Secondly, that for the class of persons described an entrance into the Church is a much better speculation; one which may be made on much lower terms; and one in which it is "but to humour the caprices and prejudices of" ecclesiastical patrons to reap a much richer "harvest." And, lastly, that in a great number of instances it is not true. Many persons are devoted to the ministry among Dissenters whose talents fit them for higher stations, and in any other channel would yield them a far more ample reward. We might add, that this reflection comes with a very ill grace from the advocate of a church whose ministers, to a great extent, avowedly regard the clerical profession as a "speculation" merely; and some of whose leading members (we are unwilling to make individual exposures, but *names* can be mentioned if required) are perpetually appealing on the same ground to dissenting students for the ministry, and tampering even with our academies.

When, also, the reviewer speaks of Dissenters as enemies to general literature,† the statement is incorrect. Reading

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sessors of houses to the rent of which the payment for a pew in the conventicle is appended), animates and supports the system of proselytism which is the life of all dissent" (Review, p. 233). This passage, more especially towards the close, discovers the most egregious ignorance of the dissenting system, and savours strongly of establishments. Indeed, it is quite characteristic of this writer, as though he had detected the "evils and inconveniences" of his church, and thought it the best way of concealing them, to impute them boldly, it matters not how unjustly, to the Dissenters.

\* "Dissenting preaching, to a young man who has no alternative between that and trade, with no very brilliant prospects, or even manual labour, is an excellent speculation. He has but to impose on the minds of his congregation by talent, or the appearance of it; to strike, if possible into a new path; or to humour the caprices and prejudices of men vain of their judgment; and he is sure of a rich harvest from the weakness of mankind."—Review, p. 238.

† "Too much occupied to enter generally into literature, or to take a wide range in the field of knowledge, they retreat gladly into their own

among them corresponds with what the same classes and the same characters would read, were they in the Church. Their proscription of polite letters is a pure fiction. Considering their situation in life, proportionate literary accomplishments are not wanting among them; and, if it were not so, it would still be very ungracious to be told of it by those who first shut us out of the universities, and then reproach us for our want of university acquirements—who first make our principles the cause of our illiteracy, and then refer to our illiteracy to show the nature of our principles. The reviewer is surely not ignorant that by Dissenters in the higher classes the value of a university education is so deeply felt, that it presents one of the strongest inducements to think dissenting principles of little importance, and to overlook, if not to abandon, them. He may, perhaps, learn, also, to estimate with more justice the character of our public schools, from the fact that one of them has furnished, during the present year, three successful candidates for academical honours at Cambridge, including the senior wrangler in that university.

It is with similar inaccuracy that he speaks of the present state of religious liberty as it affects the Dissenters.\* We are not at all disposed to underrate the privileges we enjoy, nor, whatever may be their magnitude, "to boast" of our sufferings: but we certainly require some additional proof to convince us that the Corporation and Test Acts are "obso-

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sphere, and submit to the bonds which their teachers prescribe; for the Dissenters have their literature, not merely their divinity, but their review and their magazines, apart. The 'religious world,' an expression which always causes in us a revulsive shudder at its uncharitable presumption, stamp all books, not with their 'imprimatur,' but their 'legatur,' in a spirit as severe and uncompromising as the star chamber of old, or the holy inquisition itself. Their list of 'livres defendus,' would sweep away and proscribe as large a circle of our authors as the celebrated catalogue at Rome."—Review, p. 246.

\* "Toleration, we thank God, in this country is universal; it is virtually conceded, though some obsolete laws may remain, and practically enjoyed; nor can anything be more ridiculous than the miserable grievances which the secretary of what we believe is called the Society for the Preservation [Protection] of Religious Liberty, with his utmost activity and zeal for misrepresentation, provides for the edification of Lord Holland, at the annual dinner of that worshipful board." "The Methodists, whether Calvinistic or Wesleyan, have sprung up in the bosom of the most profound peace and perfect toleration; the law has taken them under its protection, and, indeed, peculiar privileges of exemption have been conceded to dissenting teachers. They have no persecutions to boast, beyond the tricks of a few mischievous boys, or the pelting of some uncleanly missiles."—Review, pp. 249, 250.



lete laws;" or that "the tricks of mischievous boys," and "the pelting of uncleanly missiles"—those truly "ridiculous" occurrences which, however, some reverend clergymen (who, it seems, have "occasionally" "displayed a want of temper"\*), and some "country dogberries" (to borrow an appellation for our worthy magistrates from another, or perhaps the same, reviewer,† and one, therefore, which cannot be suspected of any want of propriety) have more mischievously promoted—are all that Dissenters have had to endure since the days of acknowledged episcopal persecution. To say nothing of the concerted popular and military riot within a few miles of Oxford, at a period far more recent than even the rise of Methodism—that era of "perfect toleration"—and the subsequent defiance of the whole civil power by drawn swords in the very heart of that city;‡ to say nothing of the undeniable facts (or, if not undeniable, let them be contradicted) which appear in the published proceedings of well known and responsible bodies,§ to a far more appalling amount than is admitted by the reviewer; did he not learn from the public papers of last autumn, that, informed against by one clergyman and committed by another, two dissenting ministers were, without the shadow of a crime, subjected to flagrant false imprisonment and labour at the treadmill?|| But, whatever such things may be, in his eyes nothing can "be more ridiculous." However sensitive to the wrongs of the Church, it appears that those of the Dissenters fail to excite a single emotion, either of indignation, or of pity: they are purely "ridiculous," altogether matter of diversion. Really, out of such materials as enter into the composition of this amiable person, it would almost seem that, even in modern days, one might reproduce some ancient worthies, one of whom indeed our reviewer greatly admires.¶

But, more especially still, when dissenting ministers are represented as studiously "exasperating all the irritation

\* Review, p. 250.

† Quarterly Review, No. 60. Art. 1. Pulpit Eloquence.

‡ Biographical Portraiture of the late Rev. J. Hinton, of Oxford, p. 255.

§ Sketch of the History and Proceedings of the Deputies appointed to protect the civil rights of the Protestant Dissenters; and reported proceedings of the Society for the Protection of Religious Liberty.

|| An account of these circumstances may be found in *The Times* of March 1st, 1825.

¶ Archbishop Laud, Review, p. 248.



which is caused by the distinction of rank and fortune,"\* we are happy in the assurance that it is altogether (to use a technical term) "a fancy piece." The accusation, indeed, is both cruel and wicked enough to excite indignation; but, in the total absence of evidence, it is sufficient for us simply to deny the charge. The reviewer has spoken either with proof, or without it. If the former, we call upon him to produce it, that such men may be publicly disowned, and the stain be wiped away from us. If the latter, we call upon him to retract; in which case, the very criminal feelings in which this passage must, upon this supposition, have originated, shall be overlooked. But, if he should do neither the one nor the other, it will appear that, however truly he may have said it of the clergy, it cannot be said of himself, that he has "a conscientious horror of infringing . . . on the great commandment which forbids to bear false witness;" he will stand, on the contrary, confessed and unabashed, the traducer of his neighbour, and, perhaps, of his brethren.

The spirit of illiberality, we regret to say, is not confined to this passage; it is a leaven which, more or less, pervades the whole mass. An indication of it by no means equivocal may be observed in the repeated use of the term "conventicle;" a word certainly not introduced under any necessity, since there is an ample variety of expression by which dissenting meeting-houses may be described; and, if from choice, it is difficult to conceive any other reason for the preference than the ideas of contempt and criminality with which it is almost inevitably associated. The reviewer has frequent recourse, also, to the innuendo—that weapon, not of manly warfare, but of the assassin. "If *not* conscientiously convinced," says he of the sectaries, "that salvation is not to be obtained

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\* "At present, we fear that it is too common with many of the low preachers, and a grievous sin it is, to exasperate all the irritation which is caused by the distinction of rank and fortune. The passages of Scripture which denounce woe and danger against the rich are urged perpetually to gratify the spleen, rather than to comfort the hearts, of the poor; to justify their hatred of the opulent, not to create a spirit of content at their own peculiar spiritual advantages. The poor are taught to read of the fate of Dives, not merely without commiseration, but with sensations of fierce and bitter triumph; not to use the example of Lazarus as an incitement of humble gratitude towards the great and impartial Dispenser of all good and evil, but as a ground for proud self-congratulation at their own future superiority, their predestined enjoyment almost of revenge against those whose state they now envy."—Review, p. 244.

out of their pale;”\* and again, “the principle of the narrow sect, *if* it does not contain all who are in the way of salvation:”† but why these *ifs*, when this writer knew that the very contrary was the fact? It is to be noticed, also, how busy he makes himself with the *motives* of the Dissenters: a species of inquiry always delicate, and never correctly pursued by an enemy. Not that we should complain of the most extensive application of our Lord’s rule, “By their fruits ye shall know them;” but with this the reviewer is not satisfied. Where a good motive may be assigned he *suspects* bad ones, and this altogether gratuitously; which, if it be because it better suits his purpose, indicates that purpose to be nothing but “detraction.” Thus, for instance, referring to the inadequate accommodation in the churches for the population of the larger towns, he says, the Dissenters “perceived, and with the greatest alacrity seized *their advantage*.”‡ And the Sunday evening service he represents them as “striving with the greatest zeal to make” “*most acceptable to the taste of their hearers, and most adapted to the securing and extending their own influence*,”§ doubtless upon “*the dissenting principle of accommodating the DOCTRINE to their humours and prejudices*.”|| In the same spirit he tells us that a candidate for the dissenting ministry “has but to *impose*¶ upon the minds of the congregation.” On one occasion he descends to a gross and unprovoked personality, by imputing to the well-known “secretary of the Society for the Protection of Religious Liberty” “*zeal for misrepresentation*,”\*\* a charge, which to have brought forward anonymously, and to have left without an attempt to substantiate it, cannot deserve less than the severest reprehension. At another time he proceeds without scruple to detract from the whole body. “The petty ambition of being a leading elder,” says he, “the management of the funds, an influential voice in the appointment of the pastor, the brief authority and the self-importance, above all, the advantage of being backed by a considerable party in all the worldly objects of life, a party in strict connexion and mutual dependence, and bound to the support and patronage of each other in trade and traffic; these motives, *we suspect*, are much more conducive to the

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\* Review, p. 233. † *Ibid.*, p. 240. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 233. § *Ibid.*, p. 237.  
 || *Ibid.*, p. 239. ¶ *Ibid.*, p. 238. \*\* *Ibid.*, p. 249.

prosperity of the numberless places of dissenting worship, than the imperfections of our liturgy, or the inefficiency of our preachers."\* What else this sagacious writer may choose to "suspect" we know not; but we think he should be careful how he publishes his suspicions, and blasts the fair fame of his neighbour, till he has some more certain ground, and, we will add, some more just occasion, for doing so. "Judge not," said our divine Lord, "that ye be not judged: for with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." This it is far from our desire, or design, to do; or we might obviously refer to the acknowledged principle, that our suspicions of others commonly take their colouring from the workings of our own hearts. And, if we were to set down all the inferior motives which *may* operate upon those who go to church, could we not make out a list quite as appalling? Or what should hinder us from saying, that "we suspect" they "are much more conducive to the prosperity" of the Establishment, than the rightfulness of its assumed authority, the scriptural aspect of its ceremonies, or the beneficial character of its ministry? But what end can be answered by such a proceeding? What argument does it strengthen? What error does it detect? What discussion does it facilitate, or bring to a close? To what, in a word, does it tend, but, as an exhibition of bad dispositions on one side, to excite them on the other? It is by the indulgence of such suspicions as these that differences of opinion become schisms indeed, and that the breach between Churchmen and Dissenters is most fearfully widened. It is only for the same plan to be pursued in common life, to destroy all that is left to human society of affection, esteem, and tranquillity.

We are sorry to be compelled to notice, further, the ungenerous use made of the publication of *No Fiction*.† Whatever may be the degree of censure to which the author of that work is liable, we beg to interpose the words of the reviewer himself, in reference to the evils which he admits may be found among the clergy, in bar of the general inference which he would have his readers draw from a single case against the whole body of Dissenters. "We do not mean to deny," says he, "that, in so large a body, individual cases of notorious negligence, or even worse, may be detected;

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\* Review, p. 245.

† *Ibid.*, p. 247.

nor have we any wish to avert the merited indignation from the offenders; but we deprecate, and with justice, the wicked and cruel condemnation of the whole body for the sins of a few among its members. All we plead for," he adds, "is the same justice and charity we extend to others."\* And all *we* plead for, we reply, is "the same justice and charity" he demands for himself.

We cannot dismiss this subject without expressing our grateful conviction, that there are many among the clergy and members of the Establishment with whose feelings the spirit of this review will be wholly uncongenial; and for the reviewer himself we are willing to admit it as some apology, that he may not have been long enough in intercourse with the living world to correct by actual observation the distorted views, and to lose amidst the social affections the inveterate asperity, of what, from the style of his observations, "we suspect" to be an Oxford education.

A little attention must yet be paid to some remarks made by the reviewer on the present state of the dissenting body. On this subject our readers will recollect the extract from Mr. Rennell already cited,† to which may be added the following: "The principle of dissent is so relaxed by that very accession of the Methodists which has appeared to swell their body to such an alarming extent, that it can no longer be enforced on the family with such severe and uncompromising rigidity. . . . It is no longer an inveterate hereditary malady, but a transitory disorder, from the contagion of which the nearest relatives escape. The feud is not now handed down from sire to son with all the cherished rancour of many generations, born, nursed, and bred, in acrimonious hostility, imbibing prejudice through the whole

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\* Review, p. 231.

† "The Dissenters are more active, perhaps, than they were, but they are certainly far less virulent. They do not fill their ranks upon the principle of hostility, but of indifference. A resemblance to the church is rather affected than avoided. Their places of worship are no more called meetings, but chapels; their ministers assume the title of 'reverend;' in some cases both the liturgy and the surplice are assumed. If you ask a common person why he prefers the dissenting chapel to the church, he will tell you that he knows of no difference between them—that the former is more convenient in point of time, or more commodious in point of room, and that, therefore, he attends it. Dissenting chapels in the present day are like cheap shops; there is more show in the windows, more seeming accommodation in the prices, and more bowing for custom than among the established traders."—Review, pp. 229, 230.



course of their education, and associating strictly with those of their own party alone."\* Such are the gentle but very intelligible terms, in which, it seems, this writer would describe those, if such there were, who instructed their children in the principles of dissent. He is undoubtedly correct, however, as to the fact, that comparatively few of those who are included under the general denomination of Dissenters pay much regard to them.

But, before we proceed in the remarks we mean to make on these passages, it may be better to give a little explanation. Dissenters, generally speaking, hold the truths of the Gospel in common with the Church of England, having among themselves subordinate or essential differences analogous to those which exist within the Establishment. No particular theological sentiments, therefore, can be considered as distinctive either of a Churchman or a Dissenter. By church and dissenting principles are to be understood those peculiar views of the nature, constitution, and government, of the church of Christ, which, when acted upon, give birth respectively to national or congregational churches. In this view, among the principles of the Church of England are these: that human authority may be exercised, and ought to be submitted to, in religious matters;† that the church has a right to impose ceremonies, and to decide in controversies of faith;‡ and that every man is religiously bound to attend his parish church, and no other place of religious instruction.§ These, on the other hand, are among the principles of Dissent: that no authority is to be acknowledged in the church but that of the Lord Jesus Christ; that in religious matters it is every man's right and duty to judge for himself; and that all men are entitled to the liberty of professing and acting upon their religious convictions.

Now these are the principles with which, as the basis of their system, the reviewer asserts most truly that the Dissenters of the present day are little acquainted. We hold

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\* Review, p. 234.

† See Articles of the Church of England. Art. 34.

‡ *Ibid.* Art. 20.

§ "As members of the Church of England, you were long since taught to submit in spiritual things to your spiritual pastor—the clergyman of the parish in which you reside." "In deserting your regular minister you would be guilty of disobedience to Christ." Village Sermons. By the Rev. Edward Berens. Vol. I., pp. 190, 193. First Edition.



it, however, to be not at all surprising that this should be the case. The motive which principally operates with persons who become Dissenters is drawn, for the most part, from a preferred ministry; while the Methodists, very unwilling to be Dissenters if they could have avoided it, have been driven to act on our principles without any conscious reference to the system to which they belong. We may observe also, that, though we are by no means sure that the clergy as a body have been guilty of any very flagrant excess of liberality, the government of the country has been favourable to the security and the tranquillity of Dissenters. On the one hand high church pretensions, and the alarms of Dissenters on the other, have materially diminished; and, accordingly, we hear with comparative infrequency of the arguments to be advanced in support of either system: the circumstances which give importance to them being more hypothetical than real, the principles themselves are contemplated with a proportionate feebleness. In addition to which, it is notorious that both the public and the private labours of dissenting ministers are so fully occupied with the weightier matters that concern the welfare of their hearers, that the points in dispute between themselves and the church are very seldom introduced, and very lightly dismissed.

In some respects it is little to the honour of Dissenters that such a statement can be made; for every man should be able to give a reason, and every wise man a good reason, for his conduct. But, whatever be the blame, it is certainly not confined to ourselves. To at least an equal extent may it be said of the church-going population, that they act not from principle, but from circumstances. Upon what other supposition, indeed, could the appeal of Dissenters, which this reviewer states to be "undeniably" made "on the principle of indifference," meet with such acknowledged extraordinary success?

But, after all, what does this prove? That there are many who go to church or meeting without giving a thought to the comparative merit of ecclesiastical systems; but not that "the principle of Dissent is relaxed." Every man who has any good reason to give why he is a Dissenter, or, in other words, every man who is a Dissenter *upon principle*, is so upon the same principle as ever; and has embraced the positions of the identical work with which the reviewer is

so angry, doubtless because he found that it could not be answered.\*

It is to the Dissenters in fact merely that the remarks of the reviewer apply, when he speaks of the acquisitions which the Establishment receives, and expects, from their congregations. After the magnificent array which he has made of the allurements of our system, it may appear rash to hazard a different opinion. It is somewhat new to us, however, to learn that Dissent is so singularly seductive, and we sincerely question whether, worldly attractions alone considered, the preponderance will not be found on the side of the Church. We think it not at all wonderful, therefore, that acquisitions—we ought to say *proselytes*—should be made. Existing circumstances lead every man to the subject in the form of this question, Why may I *not* be a Churchman? Now, whatever may be the number of those to whose conscientious judgment the principles of establishments may approve themselves, it will scarcely be pretended that this would be universally the case: and transfers made on any other ground indicate, neither that the principles of Dissent are altered, nor that Dissenters on conviction are less attached to their principles; but merely that, in charms which are independent of principle, the Establishment has the superiority—a fact of which the Dissenters are most humbly conscious, and which they readily allow to be, if not a very meritorious, a very convincing, argument in its favour.

If we were asked whether it is not strange that the children of Dissenters should abandon “the tenets under which they were born” (to use a phrase of the reviewer which we find it difficult to understand, and with which, as far as we do understand anything by it, we have no sympathy), we should answer, By no means. The subject of church government is not of itself adapted to operate powerfully upon the mind, nor can it for a moment be compared in importance to at least one other, more obvious

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\* The Protestant Dissenters' Catechism; a work which, though the unauthorized production of an individual minister, and wholly destitute of “official” sanction, conveys a correct, and on the whole a judicious, view of the real principles of Dissent. It contains not things “thrice refuted,” nor once, nor any “calumnies;” but stern arguments, which the reviewer has shown his wisdom in passing by. It cannot have a stronger recommendation to the attention of all persons who wish for information than the notice he has taken of it. —Review, p. 229.

and happily more influential. Its chief practical bearing is on religious liberty; and, notwithstanding loud and universal professions of regard, it is but few who love liberty for her own sake. Give men comfort, and for the most part they care little for freedom. Never was tyranny of any kind broken, or resisted, by mankind generally, but on account of its wretchedness. The religious subjection required by the Established Church, therefore, being divested of its oppressive aspect, or rather this being kept out of sight, while the thousand attractions with which it is associated are alone exhibited, it is not surprising that some should be induced to repose in her bosom. We might, indeed, turn the tables on our assailant, and say that the church is endeavouring to replenish her ranks, "not upon the principle of hostility, but of indifference;" not so much by asserting that there is anything wrong in Dissent, as by showing that there is everything comfortable in the Establishment. The mode of persuasion is substantially this: Why should you not go to church? You cannot find any great fault with the prayer-book; and is not Mr. — a most excellent minister? The principles of the Establishment, as such, we believe are seldom proposed in this connexion; or, if they are, it is rather as topics of apology than as arguments for the change. None but a startling and repulsive effect could be produced by such questions as these:—Do you not see the propriety with which men claim authority, and exercise dominion, in Christ's kingdom? Is it not quite obvious that the church has power to impose ceremonies at her pleasure, and to decide questions of theology? You feel perfectly satisfied that the church can answer for your errors, and highly esteem the privilege of resigning your right of private judgment? You are quite clear that, if you go to meeting, or even to any other church but that of your own parish, you will be guilty of disobedience to Christ, as rejecting your appointed and only lawful teacher? *No person is a churchman in PRINCIPLE*, or, which is the same thing, no man embraces the principles on which the Establishment is founded, *who cannot answer these and similar questions in the AFFIRMATIVE*; yet these are certainly the very last topics recommended to the consideration of an inquirer. They are principles in fact *not* admitted by immense numbers of church-people, who are as much determined to exercise their

own judgment, and to select their own teachers, as though they were Dissenters. These dissenting opinions, on the contrary, are held by, perhaps, the great majority of the members of the Establishment: and the reason why this circumstance does not render them Dissenters in fact, is that the government of the church accommodates itself to their principles; concealing her own, which, for England in the nineteenth century, would be found in theory too absurd, and in practice too intolerable. If the essential principles of her ecclesiastical system shall ever again be acted upon and enforced, the country will be filled with Dissenters. We are far from wishing the aspect of the Establishment to be less mild. We are glad that she knows her own interest: but let the reviewer be assured, that there are yet some Dissenters by whom the just and holy principles of the system are too well beloved to be even in appearance surrendered, and who would, if necessary, sacrifice in their defence their property, their liberty, and their lives.

The reviewer seems to think that the labours of the evangelical clergy tend to increase the number of Dissenters; and, in connexion with the impossibility of choosing their own teachers; this is assuredly true, as experience fully proves. But this is the fault of the Establishment itself, and one which it would do well to correct. In other respects, it is surprising that this writer should be blind to the immense acquisitions made to the worshippers in the church by this portion of the clergy. If it be wished to lessen the number of apparent and nominal Dissenters, let but a zealous and affectionate evangelical minister be placed in every parish, and it would be effectually done; and yet this is the class of persons from whom the orthodox clergy are perpetually crying that the church is most in danger. Were we to indulge the spirit of party, we should rejoice in this egregious blindness; but we deeply regret it, and earnestly long for its removal. The unspeakable benefit which would result to the nation at large, and our joy as Christians, would annihilate our supposable regret as Dissenters. As to our own prospects, we could be well content to learn them from this reviewer. "The upper orders," says he, "are still in general sound" \* Churchmen; and he pleases himself with the idea that Dissenters of this class are going over to the Establishment,

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\* Review, p. 245.

while we all know that the lower orders are kept in very substantial thralldom. Among the middle ranks it is acknowledged that Dissent is progressive, and the concession is much to our honour. It is here that, according to the reviewer, "the honest pride of independence" is the most powerful, and the worldly attractions of the church the least so; and these, we may add, are the ranks which, in a free and commercial country, are perpetually rising in importance, and by which ultimately both the higher and the lower must be decisively affected. The "progress of Dissent" the Church of England is acknowledged to be "inefficient" to check,\* and, if the reviewer be correct, nothing seems to remain but that, as Dissent shall advance, it should conduct the Establishment to the consummation of a natural and peaceful death.

Flattering, however, as the prospect thus—unexpectedly from such a quarter—exhibited to us may be, there is one on which we dwell with far greater complacency. We delight ourselves in the anticipation that, by the combined activity of all good men of whatever name, knowledge and piety, happiness and virtue, shall fill our own and every land; preparing the way for the destruction of every error, and enabling every party to welcome the destruction of its own; and leading to that more blessed consummation when ecclesiastical platforms of every species shall be removed, like the striking of a scaffolding, that the spiritual temple may appear in its unity and glory.†

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\* Review, p. 231.

† In the course of these pages we have suggested the best apology we could frame for the reviewer, and it is one we are quite disposed to admit *ad valorem*; but none can be admitted for the Review, which *ought* to be under the superintendence of a capable and vigilant editor. The insertion of this article, indeed, cannot be considered merely as a specimen of editorial incapacity and neglect. It is rather a part of the general system, which has been but too justly described by a literary antagonist in the following terms:—

"This journal, then, is a depository for every species of political sophistry, and personal calumny. There is no abuse or corruption that does not there find a jesuitical palliation, or a barefaced vindication. There we meet the slime of hypocrisy, the varnish of courts, the cant of pedantry, the cobwebs of the law, the iron hand of power. Its object is as mischievous as the means by which it is pursued are odious. The intention is to poison the sources of public opinion, and of individual fame; to pervert literature from being the natural ally of freedom and humanity, into an engine of priestcraft and despotism. . . . No means are stuck at in accomplishing this laudable end. Strong in patronage, they trample on truth, justice, and decency. . . . No statement in the Quarterly Review is to be trusted; there is no fact that is not misrepresented in it, no question that is not garbled, no character that is not slandered, if it can answer the purposes of a party to do so."—*The Spirit of the Age*, pp. 297, 298.



## A VINDICATION OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN INDIA FROM A RECENT ATTACK IN THE QUARTERLY REVIEW.

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“Nothing can be more unfair than the manner in which the scoffers have represented the missionaries. . . . The plan which they have laid for their proceedings is perfectly prudent and unexceptionable. . . . A plain statement of the fact will be the best proof of their success.”—*Quarterly Review*, vol. I., pp. 224, 225.

FEW things can be more surprising, even in this age of wonders, than an attack on Missions\* from the *Quarterly Review*. To say nothing of a very recent article† in which these exertions of Christian benevolence are spoken of generally and individually in the kindest terms, the public cannot yet have forgotten how much honour this journal did itself by a noble stand on their behalf at the very commencement of its labours;‡ when it vindicated more especially the missionaries at Serampore, who have now most strangely, without any alteration on their part, become the most prominent, but not the sole, objects of its hostility. To the paper we have mentioned, though far from being in all respects complimentary or correct, we can cheerfully refer every one who wishes to know the true character of the Baptist Missions to the East, or to find a reply to their present assailant; a purpose for which we shall shortly have the pleasure of making some pointed and decisive extracts.

In the meantime, it is by no means difficult to discern the motive of this assault. It is manifestly subservient to the exaltation of the Church Establishment in India, “from which,” says the writer, “we have better hope than from all

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\* No. lxxv. Art. American Mission to the Burmans.

† No. lxxiii.

‡ Vol. I., p. 193.

the missions that have hitherto been sent to that quarter.”\* Now, whatever we may think of the Church establishment itself, or of its adaptation to missionary agency, we are far from being disposed to complain of a Churchman for thinking highly of it, or for speaking as he thinks. It is unquestionably to the honour of the Church of England to have paid some attention, at length, to the spiritual wants of her nominal members in India; and we are happy in expressing our most cordial concurrence in the just eulogy pronounced on the present bishop of Calcutta, under whose auspices, or any other, we shall sincerely rejoice in beholding her increasing usefulness. Not a doubt can be entertained that she possesses ample resources, which require only to be wisely and vigorously employed in order to be productive of the most extensive benefits. Her entrance on this course of beneficent exertion we hail with unfeigned delight; and if, in the brightening glories of her progress, her real utility should transcend that of other labourers, not excepting even the Baptist missionaries at Serampore, we shall feel unmingled joy in her splendour. But we see no reason why the high esteem bespoken for one body of Christians should be connected with the depreciation of others. We cannot for a moment suppose that unfair comparisons and false assertions are necessary to show the superiority of the Church of England to all other religious communities. It cannot be true that the only way to secure her existence is to put all the others to death; or that she has no chance of shining till every other light is extinguished. To depreciate others for her exaltation, therefore, is altogether unnecessary; and it is as dishonourable as it is needless. We are happy to add, too, that this is not the way in which missionary societies

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\* P. 41. We merely beg to annex to this statement the following extracts, with an inquiry *which* of its opinions the readers of this journal are to receive?—“It is highly desirable that there should be” “a church establishment for India.” “But would the archbishops, bishops, deans, and chapters, do the work of missionaries? . . . There is ability, and there is learning, in the Church of England, but its age of fermentation has long been over; and that zeal which for this work is the most needful is, we fear, possessed only by the Methodists.” “Let it not be deemed that this is spoken disrespectfully. Far from depreciating church establishments, our wish and desire is, that they may be extended:—let there be one in India, the more magnificent the better; but do not think, even if this were done, to supersede the Baptist missionaries.”—*Quarterly Review*, vol. I., pp. 220, 225.

have been usually treated by her members. No small number of them have felt that, whatever greater results might be expected from the official movements of the hierarchy itself, it is quite right that the effects of voluntary exertion should not be lost; and that every well-intended and well-directed endeavour for the diffusion of Christianity is entitled to their approbation and encouragement. Many of the most generous supporters of the several missions, and of the Baptist Mission at Serampore especially, are found, accordingly, among the clergy and laity of the Establishment. We gratefully renew our acknowledgments for their aid, and are assured that they have no sympathy with the hostility which is now directed against these noble charities. Indeed, we are persuaded that there are very few whom this article will not fill with astonishment and indignation.

While we thus joyfully acquit the Church of England, and its members generally, of whom this nameless and shameless writer is by no means entitled to be considered as the representative, of all participation in his crime, it is a fact, nevertheless, that the Quarterly reviewer has made upon missions a very serious and bitter attack. It is true, indeed, that the only efforts to which he specifically refers are those of the Baptist missionaries at Serampore, whose high character and extensive usefulness have doubtless gained for them an honourable pre-eminence in his hatred; but it is manifest that others are equally involved in the charges adduced, since the great principles upon which the Baptist missionaries have acted are common to all, without excepting the Church Missionary Society itself. The case, therefore, is one of common interest; all parties should be aroused as to a common danger, and united to repel a common enemy. If such an attack as this should succeed in injuring a single mission, it will tend to establish principles, and generate feelings, destructive to every similar exertion in the world.

Nor is the assault less deadly in its aim than we have represented it. It is tempered, indeed, with a little, and but a little, apparent candour. "It is impossible," says the reviewer, "that there should be any difference of opinion as to the object" of the Baptist Missions to the East; "and we think there should be none," he adds, "as to the single-hearted zeal with which it has been pursued."\* The

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\* Quarterly Review, p. 38.

“labours and sacrifices” of the missionaries are further “noticed as most extraordinary and meritorious.” But meritorious of what? we ask, if it be true, as this writer asserts, not only that they have issued in “failure;” but that the missionaries have not “been pursuing the right path to effect their object;”\* that, with “a great want of discretion, or something worse, they send forth hasty and imperfect translations of the Scriptures before they have acquired a competent knowledge of the languages in which they write, so that their labours are simply useless, if not pernicious, to those for whom they are intended;”† that “the versions abound with glaring mistakes, which render them absurd or ridiculous in the eyes of the natives, and that, by words mis-spelt, misplaced, or misemployed, the sense of the original is sometimes totally changed;”‡ that they adopt the “system of principally attempting to convert, and connecting themselves almost exclusively with, the very dregs of the people;”§ and that, finally, of the converts “two-thirds are pariahs, or beggars, and the rest composed of sudras, or vagrants, and outcasts of several tribes, who, being without resource, turned Christians in order to form new connexions, chiefly for the purpose of marriage, or with some other interested views, those who remain Christians being the very worst of the flock.”|| Yet these are the things which this reviewer gravely, and not dubiously, asserts; and, if they are true, whatever “single-hearted zeal” and “extraordinary sacrifices” have been expended in such labours and results, the missionaries are certainly in no small degree meritorious of public abandonment—we might say, indignation—unless, indeed, commiseration should take the place of so severe, but otherwise so justifiable, an emotion. But ARE THESE THINGS TRUE? This is a question which the public, as well as missionary societies, will feel to be of the deepest importance; and it is one which we are anxious to have thoroughly examined. We have no wish for concealment. If the existing missions are not worthy of support, let the world know it, and abandon them. But if, on the contrary, it shall be found that the accusations are false, and by being needlessly false give reason to suppose them malicious, it cannot be too much to expect that public execration shall fall on the head of the traducer,

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\* Quarterly Review, p. 38. † *Ibid.* ‡ *Ibid.* § *Ibid.*, p. 39. || *Ibid.*, p. 40.

and the innocent objects of his attack escape unhurt from so deadly a blow.

On the part of the friends of missions, it will readily be admitted that such allegations as these are strongly adapted to arouse indignation, and to compel defence; yet they might perhaps be passed by, were it not for the pretensions of the work in which they appear. If the *Quarterly Review* were notoriously ignorant, or avowedly irreligious, or systematically hostile to missionary undertakings, its character might afford a sufficient antidote to its tendency. But we are quite sensible that the case is far otherwise. Notwithstanding all our differences from it, we do justice with pleasure to its literary eminence, and acknowledge with yet greater pleasure the good service it has rendered, both to the cause of religion in general, and that of missions in particular. These very excellencies, however, aggravate its powers of mischief. Had this journal never appeared our friend, we should have the less cause to regard its hostility. The public mind would yield little to its opinions, were it not for the influence acquired by the semblance of wisdom and good feeling.

It is the more necessary to come forward because of the insidious nature of the assault, and of the too probable systematic adoption of this mode of warfare. A cursory observer of the recent number would have no suspicion that it contained anything of this kind; but, if he thinks it worth while to enter on the review of *Mrs. Judson's Account of the American Mission to the Burmans*, he there finds this disguised attack upon the Baptist Missions in the East. The poison is infused in the manner least adapted to attract attention, or to excite alarm. The reviewer has just "a few words" to say in passing, nothing of sufficient consequence or prominence to deserve notice; something, on the contrary, so brief, trivial, and accidental, as to preclude the opportunity of an answer without subjecting ourselves to the imputation of ridiculously magnifying trifles: and then he takes the opportunity of pouring forth concentrated venom, because he imagines, either that he is not watched, or that he cannot be counteracted. Under an idea that he is not professedly engaged in controversy, he feels no necessity for examining documents, or for adducing proofs, or for confining himself within the bounds of truth. He seems to revel



in the luxurious licence of saying whatever he pleases, and of insinuating what, even under such favourable circumstances, he dares not say. We should have some respect for a manly assailant, who would let us know of his coming, and grapple fairly with the facts of our case; but this is a reptile adversary, who, as though conscious of the littleness of his powers, but not willing to forego the gratification of his malice, can do nothing more characteristic of himself, or of his cause, than slyly to approach, and bite us from behind. Nor is it the only time he has done so. The fifty-eighth number of this journal\* contains about an equal quantity of similar matter, in the review of Sir John Malcolm's *Memoir of Central India*; and, from the similarity of style and sentiment, together with the implicit confidence placed in the abbé Dubois, from whom the same quotation is made which is found in the present article, little doubt can be entertained of its having been written by the same hand—a fact which we shall take the liberty to assume. It appears, therefore, that the *Quarterly Review* has in its pay a writer who, bitterly hating Christian Missions, but afraid to attack them openly, is lying in wait for opportunities of depreciating them by sly and wary calumny. Judging from the two specimens before us, his stock of this article is small; but it seems each item is to be repeated at intervals, supported by the same authorities, and the literal repetition of the same quotations; the viper judging rightly, that, if he makes any considerable impression, it must be not so much by the force of his tooth, as by the frequency of its application. The only difference in these assaults is that the last is the more daring of the two, an indication of what we may expect if his endeavours are totally disregarded.

It is, indeed, high time that the *Quarterly Review* should cease to be considered oracular on the subject of Christian Missions. This writer is utterly incapable of conceiving their true character, and of estimating their importance. He seems to think that there is no darkness resting on the future condition of the heathen, and is almost petrified by the "Calvinistic" supposition that the pagans ("excellent" people), either of past or present generations, are less happy in this respect than Christians.† It is not for us at present to dis-

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\* Vol. xxx., p. 409–413.† *Quarterly Review*, lxx., pp. 42, 43.

cuss this point, or to remind our readers how different are the representations of Holy Writ; but it is obvious that upon this hypothesis the grand motive to missionary exertion is annihilated. If the everlasting salvation of men is not connected with the dissemination of the Gospel, then the object is not worth a tithe of the money, the labour, and the lives, that are consumed in its promotion. With this reviewer, therefore, the friends of Missions can have no sympathy, nor can they look with any respect on his counsels or his views, which, to say the truth, are worthy of the pagan and anti-christian principle on which he sets out. He thinks it much wiser to teach geography than to circulate the Scriptures, and much more important in the first place to say "that mount Meru is not 20,000 miles high," than "that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners."\* He conceives that there is no chance of making converts to Christianity without a pompous ceremonial and splendid rites,† and that the doctrine of Boudh, but more especially the sound of an organ,‡ is much more intelligible than the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah.§ He is totally blind to the nature of true religion, which he seems to identify with the existence of national establishments, and thinks any result short of this convicts the

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\* Quarterly Review, lxx., p. 41.

† "The humble character which the teachers of the Gospel assume" "is decidedly injudicious" "among a people exceedingly influenced by pomp and splendour."—Quarterly Review, lxx., pp. 39, 42.

‡ "It might not probably be found injudicious to erect small but suitable chapels at every residency, with a *good organ* in each, and solemn music to allure the nations to attend; it might happen that some who 'went to scoff' would 'remain to pray.'"—Quarterly Review, lviii., p. 412.

§ "All the day long" the missionary "says to the passers by, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.' Now this, we confess, does appear to us to be silly enough; and we would seriously ask Mr. Judson, whether he really expected that these 'passers by' could, by any human possibility, have the least comprehension of this beautiful metaphor? and whether, taking it literally (the only way in which they could take it), he could blame the poor Burmans for laughing in his face, and looking upon him as one who had either taken leave of his senses, or one who was playing the fool with themselves?"—Quarterly Review, lxx., p. 42. We have been used to think that the Eastern nations are eminently addicted to the use of metaphorical language; and, moreover, that the Word of God is adapted to all ages and all countries; but now it seems that a missionary cannot quote one of the simplest of Gospel invitations without being supposed to be "playing the fool," and to have "taken leave of his senses." But this is not all: the reviewer "apprehends," and seems to believe, that the missionary "in the present instance was very far from" "using national

missionaries both of folly and a failure. On this ground he cherishes no equivocal partiality for Popery, which he thinks admirably adapted to extend Christianity in the hands of the Franciscan and the Dominican friars, but most of all in those of the Jesuits, whose failure seems not a little to stumble his faith as to the universal diffusion of this religion at all.\* He sees no difference of any consequence between Popery and Protestantism; he knows of no other means or principles which can be brought to bear on the heart of man than those which were employed by the Jesuits, and is so completely fascinated with the pomp and splendour, the wealth and pride, of the Romish hierarchy, that, although he must know they allow no salvation out of their own pale, he recommends them to Calvinists as a pattern of

images," there being no such thing as water nor thirst in Burmah; from "explaining the drift of his parable;" and even from "speaking intelligibly, or in the vernacular tongue"! (p. 42.) Our readers will probably think this too silly; and, though we would be far from such cruelty if we thought he had "taken leave of his senses," yet, since the reviewer seems to be very condescendingly "playing the fool" for our amusement, he will not blame us if we in our turn "laugh in his face."

\* "The Jesuits certainly contrived to manage these matters better." "If any man could hope to succeed in making converts to the Christian faith, it was the mild and unpretending abbé Dubois." "He lived *as the natives*, and *with them*, and submitted to every restraint and privation; in a word, he adopted the usages and prejudices of the inhabitants, as the early Jesuits were accustomed to do, in order to forward the views of his mission." "The Roman Catholic ritual would appear to be that of all others best calculated to make an impression, and to gain proselytes. [Compare this, by the way, with the following annunciation from the same oracular source. "The QUAKERS (!) are of all people best adapted to spread Christianity among the heathen."—Quarterly Review, vol. i., p. 222.] It has, as the abbé well observes, a poorga, or sacrifice; it has processions, images, statues, *tirtan* (or holy water), fasts, *tittys* (or feasts), prayers for the dead, invocation of saints, &c., all which practices bear more or less resemblance to those in use among the Hindoos."—Review, lviii., pp. 410, 411, 412. So then, to convert the Hindoos to Christianity, the abbé abandoned Christianity for Hindooism, and attempted to supersede one system of idolatry by introducing another. "Yet it failed altogether." "This failure is the more extraordinary, as in all the above-mentioned countries the ceremonials of religion bear a most striking resemblance to those of the church of Rome; so like, indeed, are their devotional exercises, that one of the Catholic missionaries says the devil must have got the start of the Jesuits, and suggested them" (lxv., pp. 41, 42). "What chance, then, have the evangelical missionaries?" says the reviewer (lviii., p. 411), not having the benefit, we suppose, of such a forerunner, to suggest resemblances which they may "turn to their advantage." Yet it is asserted on the same authority, that "the Hindoos may be more easily converted than any nation in the world, except the Hottentots!"—Quarterly Review, vol. I., p. 213.

Christian charity.\* So easily is he imposed upon, that he is led implicitly by the abbé Dubois;† and so copious in his inquiries, so resolved to know the truth, that he betrays scarcely a symptom of having referred to any other authority. Nor is he less ignorant than superficial and absurd. He thinks that all Baptists are Calvinists, and besides them he does not know that there are any missionaries in India, or any Calvinists in Christendom.‡ He dreams that the institution of schools for the instruction of the rising generation, especially in the upper ranks of life, has been neglected by the missionaries at Serampore;§ when all the world besides himself knows that these very men were the first to open this line of exertion; that they established many schools for the native children; that they projected a college for youth of the higher ranks; and that they originated the impulse of the public mind in India under which all classes are now vigorously acting, and of which the Church of England is at length availing itself. To finish the sketch of this eminent writer on missions, it may be added that in full proportion to his absurdity and ignorance are his rashness and audacity. He tells you untruths with the utmost naiveté, and brings groundless accusations as though sustained by proof from Holy Writ. But we forbear; the facts will appear immediately. We ask only, whether a writer like this is qualified to direct public opinion on the subject of Christian Missions? Whether it is to him that the friends of these admirable institutions will look for wise counsel, or just representation? Let him rather be set down as an enemy to the cause, and the worst of enemies, one never hereafter to be trusted, because he has assumed the disguise of a friend. Let it be a settled point that nothing can be received upon his authority, or expected from him but hostility, since his very fondling, like that of the serpent, is but designed to secure an opportunity of aiming a more deadly wound. Such a state of the

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\* Quarterly Review, lxx., p. 43.

† For the true character of this writer, whom the Quarterly reviewer seems afraid to expose to critical examination, we refer our readers to the following works: A Reply to the Letters of the Abbé Dubois, by the Rev. James Hough, Chaplain to the Honourable East India Company: An Answer to the Abbé Dubois, by Henry Townley, Missionary to Bengal: and the Eclectic Review for October and November, 1823, and July, 1824.

‡ Quarterly Review, lxx., p. 42.

§ *Ibid.*, lxx., p. 41.



public mind, if it should not break his tooth, will at least make innocent its poison.

But let us come to particulars, and examine the allegations brought against the Baptist missionaries in the East.

In the first place, we are told that their labours have resulted in "failure."\* We confess ourselves rather at a loss to know what this reviewer would understand by success. We have a suspicion that what we should consider as an eminent degree of success, he would regard as a failure still. Nothing, probably, would satisfy him but a splendid church establishment, for which we acknowledge our system affords no capabilities, and we have no desire. The success we wish is altogether independent of any such result, nor have any measures conducive to it ever been taken; and, however difficult this reviewer and some other persons may find it to believe us sincere in this profession, we conceive that, upon the supposition of our sincerity, it is one for which no Churchman will be angry with us. There can be no rivalry, and there need be no jealousy. Whatever may be the fruits of our labour, they will in no measure pre-occupy India as the site of an ecclesiastical establishment, or forestal the rich harvest of church patronage. But, admitting this, it by no means follows that the Baptist Missions in the East have been unsuccessful. The success of a mission lies essentially in two things: first, in the actual conversion of men to Christianity; secondly, in the establishment of well-adapted and effective means for the conversion of others. The former is immediate success, the latter is remote, but it is not therefore unreal, or illusory. However this reviewer may prefer Pinnock's Geography to the Bible, it is true, nevertheless, that "the Word of God is quick and powerful," characterized by a living and unfailing energy, as well as a divine adaptation to the moral state of mankind. Were nothing effected by a mission but a translation of the Scriptures, it could not be described as a failure; for one of the grand and instituted means of enlightening and converting the world would have been put into operation, and enough, therefore, would have been done to give hope and promise of ultimate usefulness. But much more than this may be done without supposing even a single convert. The institution of schools for the

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\* Quarterly Review, lxx., p. 38.



communication of elementary knowledge, as the reviewer himself will admit, for we have his own authority for the assertion, will do great things; according to him, indeed, more than even the Scriptures. Nor is it possible that what is done in this way should ever be lost. A person once emancipated never returns to the belief of ghosts and goblins. The understanding once enlightened does not relapse under the dominion of absurdities. The dawn of knowledge is like that of the day, of certain progress and increasing brightness. A stimulus is thus given which continues to operate after its cause has ceased, augmenting itself by its own action, and acting more powerfully by means of every augmentation. If the Popish missionaries had instituted schools and faithfully translated the Scriptures,\* if they had applied themselves to the emancipation of the mind and the improvement of the heart, their labours would not have been fruitless. The Baptist missionaries in the East have done these things, and, even if no results could as yet be found, it might be affirmed that they had conducted an effective and successful mission. They have put into vigorous activity the most direct and powerful means of usefulness, and it is impossible they can be in vain. But, even if it were possible, it is far too soon to affirm it. The period through which the efficacy of these means is to be tried is not yet elapsed; it is scarcely begun. The ages to come present the scope for their operation, the field in which the harvest shall be gathered. To say *yet* that any mission has failed, is to assume an insight into futurity to which no man is entitled; or, in looking into it, it is to contradict all known principles and experience. It is to say that the rising of the sun is a failure, because he is seen struggling with the clouds which skirt the horizon. It is to say that the cultivation of the earth is a failure, because the harvest does not immediately follow the labours of the seed-time. If an agricultural mission were sent to some desert land, and, in the space of a few weeks after the commencement of its labours, an inquiry were to be made into its success, would any man in his senses announce it to be a failure because the earth was not covered

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\* "The Jesuits cautiously abstained from translating such portions of the Scriptures as they knew would be injurious to their cause." That is, they omitted everything respecting sacrifices for sin, and translated the battle between David and Goliath!—Review, lviii., p. 412.

with a golden crop? Surely not. He would say the mission had succeeded, if he found the forests felled, the ground broken up, and the soil prepared for the seed; but more especially if he learned that the seed itself had been cast in, or saw the blade actually springing from its unwonted bed. Let the success of the Baptist missionaries in the East be thus estimated, and we are content. How well they have done it we shall consider afterwards: but they have in fact translated the Scriptures, not into one language, but many; and many thousand copies have been circulated in the several countries in which these languages are spoken: they have instituted schools for instructing gratuitously the children of the poor, and have actually instructed many thousands of them; while their labours have been the primary cause of producing such a change in public opinion and feeling as promises to give birth to the most extensive and beneficial effects. They have been there yet but three-and-thirty years, and they had long to labour in clearing and breaking up the ground; they found opportunity at length to cast in the seed; they have cherished an assurance that their endeavours could not be in vain; and (to say nothing of a single convert) they see the result of them, both in the prosperity of their own schools and the beneficial circulation of their own translations, in the numerous other persons now employed all around them in similar labours, in the multiplied openings for usefulness, and in the growing activity of the public mind. The seed is springing up luxuriantly, and no man doubts a harvest but this sagacious reviewer, who, yet more alienated in his heart than remote in his position, coolly pronounces it a failure.

But these missions are by no means destitute of *immediate* success. It is true, indeed, all India is not become Christian, nor is the population converted by millions. But converts have been made. And, if the accounts of this kind which have been presented to the public make but little show, it is both because the missionaries have been desirous to avoid ostentation, and because they proceed on principles which separate the chaff from the wheat. Were the national religions of India to be superseded by a Christian church establishment, we are aware that its members, and probably its successes, would be reckoned by millions; but, without expressing our own sentiments further, it is quite obvious that this would be only nominal Christianity. Of the value

of such Christianity there may be different opinions, with which at present we shall not interfere; we have only to say that we esteem it rather mischievous than beneficial, and wholly renounce it. The Baptist missionaries carry this point even beyond their fellow-labourers of all other denominations, since they do not baptize, or regard as Christian population, the children of professed and apparent converts. If, therefore, those of whom we speak as converts are few in number, it is in part because the term is employed with great discrimination. The most careful winnowing undoubtedly leaves a portion of chaff among the wheat, but the sample is of much better quality than it would be without such attention; and, if it is but few converts that we hear of, it is satisfactory to be able to think them sincere. Bearing in mind the discrimination with which the term is applied, the number of native converts in the Baptist Missions to the East is by no means inconsiderable. The abbé Dubois states his at three hundred. In about an equal term of years, those at the Baptist missions may be computed at four or five times the number, certainly more than a thousand. For those who know how to estimate the value of immortal souls, this is a most cheering and animating thought; but it is one with which the reviewer has so little sympathy, that it does nothing to redeem the missions from being exhibited as a failure.

They may still deserve this appellation, however, if he has correctly shown "what sort of converts are made in India." If they are converted from bad to worse, or are no better for the change, it had been wiser to leave them as they were. Upon this topic the reviewer quotes the abbé Dubois, who says that his converts were persons "who, being without resource, turned Christians in order to form new connexions, chiefly for the purpose of marriage, or with some other interested views;" and he adds, "I am verily ashamed that the resolution I have taken to declare the whole truth on this subject forces me to make the humiliating avowal, that those who continued Christians are the very worst among my flock." Now there can be no objection at all to receive the testimony of "this honest Catholic" to the character of his own converts; but we cannot see on what principle his description is to be applied to those of other missions. There might be some justice, perhaps, in transferring it to missions

of a similar kind—namely, Popish ones—for like causes produce like effects; but all Protestant missionaries, we suppose, proceed upon totally different principles. The Baptist missionaries have never reckoned men converts by virtue of their submission to a ceremony, or their acknowledgment of priestly authority; nor have they held out any of those allurements of the influence of which the abbé so bitterly complains; nor have they suffered any whom they knew to be bad men to continue in their flock. On the contrary, as they consider no man a Christian who does not give evidence of a godly life, so with them the profession of Christianity by the natives has frequently been connected with great sacrifices, while the purity of the flock has been carefully preserved by the discipline of reproof or excommunication. Respecting the converts of such a mission, the abbé Dubois is obviously unqualified to speak. At all events, it is certain that the Baptist missionaries have never made any such humiliating confession. As honest as this mortified Papist, and more ready to declare the whole truth, they have told the public repeatedly of what sort their converts are; and why the reviewer has brought forward the testimony of a man who, however honest, must necessarily be ignorant on this point, instead of referring to some of the accredited publications of the missionaries themselves, it is difficult to say, unless it were that he was determined to defame them, and reckless of the means. From one of these publications we beg to lay before our readers a brief sketch of one of their converts, now deceased.

“Krishna Prisada was enabled to appreciate the value of the Christian system. He admired its doctrines. The doctrine of the fall, of the divinity of Christ, of his incarnation, sufferings, and death, and of our complete salvation on the reception of Christ, through the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit; these doctrines were cordially received by him as the foundation principles of the Gospel. Not only by his words did he confess Christ before the Brahmins (himself a Brahmin), but his Christian walk confirmed his testimony that his profession was genuine. He possessed tenderness of conscience among a people who make sin their plaything, and among whom this sentiment is universal, that sin is the play of the gods. He regarded truth amongst a nation of liars; whose very gods were liars, and whose shastras, in

certain cases, declare the innocence of lying. He was a man of integrity amongst a nation who value themselves on their dexterity in the arts of deception and fraud. Divine grace thus changed his nature and his habits, and enabled him to make head against sin, which runs through the plains of Bengal like a mighty torrent.”\*

If the converts made in India are such as these, the missions to that country are not a failure. Their immediate success, though not commensurate with our wishes, is unequivocal and gratifying. And the prospect of their remote success is thus greatly extended. For, if good may be anticipated from the diffusion of knowledge and of the Word of God, much more may it be expected from the character and activity of Christians themselves. They are emphatically declared to be the light of the world. They shine as lights in a dark place, holding forth the word of life. Every Christian becomes an instrument of promoting Christianity, and some of the native converts have been rendered eminently conducive to this end, by zealous and well-directed efforts for the instruction of their countrymen. A leaven is thus infused into the mass which will continue to work till the whole is leavened; and the time may be anticipated—were any calamity to produce such a result, we should not doubt its being now come—when the diffusion of Christianity would triumphantly go forward were every European Christian expelled from the Eastern world.

But we have certainly been taking unnecessary pains; for we find ample testimony to the point under consideration from a quarter which our antagonist, and all the readers of the *Quarterly Review*, will undoubtedly consider as possessing the highest authority.

“In fourteen years (this was written in 1809) these missionaries have done more towards spreading the knowledge of the Scriptures among the heathen than has been accomplished, or even attempted, by all the world besides. A plain statement of the fact will be the best proof of their diligence and success. The first convert was baptized in December, 1809 [1799], and in seven years from that time has the number amounted to 109, of whom nine were afterwards excluded, or suspended, or had been lost sight of.

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\* *Memoirs of Four Christian Hindoos.* By the Serampore Missionaries. Pp. 94, 95, 100, 70, 72.



Carey and his son have been in Bengal fourteen years, the other brethren only nine; they had all a difficult language to acquire before they could speak to a native, and to preach and argue in it required a thorough and familiar knowledge. Under these circumstances the wonder is not that they have done so little, but that they have done so much; for it will be found that, without this difficulty to retard them, no religious opinions have spread more rapidly in the same time, unless there was some remarkable folly or extravagance to recommend them, or some powerful worldly inducement. Their progress will be continually accelerating; the difficulty is at first, as in introducing vaccination into a distant land; when the matter has once taken, one subject supplies infection for all around him, and the disease takes root in the country. The husband converts the wife, the son converts the parent, the friend his friend, and every fresh proselyte becomes a missionary in his own neighbourhood. Thus their sphere of influence and of action widens, and the eventual issue of a struggle between truth and falsehood is not to be doubted.”\*

The lapse of seventeen years since this testimony was borne has only furnished ample verifications of it. And if, upon such undeniable authority, the public may be satisfied of the success of the missionaries in the East, they may be assured also that the measures they have adopted are not deficient in wisdom. Indeed, we have particular pleasure in concluding this department of our labours with a declaration from the same high quarter, quite as applicable now as it was seventeen years ago, that “the plan which they have laid down for their proceedings is perfectly prudent and unexceptionable.”†

The reviewer is guilty of a direct, we hope an unintentional, falsehood, in asserting that the Baptist missionaries in the East adopt the “system of principally attempting to convert, and connecting themselves almost exclusively with, the very dregs of the people.”‡ Upon any known principles of our nature, good or bad, this is utterly incredible; and it is false in fact. The missionaries are undoubtedly happy in embracing opportunities of instructing the poor and the outcast as well as others. This reviewer, it seems, would

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\* Quarterly Review, vol. I., p. 225. † *Ibid.* ‡ *Ibid.*, lxx., p. 39.

have them abandoned altogether, as "unfitted to comprehend the divine mysteries of the Gospel," and as "throwing an impediment in the way of an introduction to the higher orders." Perhaps he thinks, too, that the souls of the "uneducated rabble" are of no value. But there are those who differ from him in these fundamental articles of this right-royal religion. The missionaries doubtless think, and many think with them, "that the redemption of the soul" of the meanest "is precious;" that the things which are hidden from the wise and prudent are, under divine teaching, easily understood by babes; and that, if the higher orders will condescend to accept no salvation but one from which, as from their wealth and honours, the poor are excluded, they must not be allowed to shut others out of the kingdom of heaven, however they may choose to exclude themselves. After all, it is most certain that the missionaries do everything in their power to engage the attention of all classes of men, and that they are supported in a style of life not adapted to bring them into contempt. If among their hearers or converts are found few learned, or mighty, or noble, with many of the poor and outcast, it is not because the latter have been sought, but because the former have refused; and, instead of finding fault with them for instructing those whom they can gain, the reviewer would have done better to admonish those whom they cannot. No men will be more thankful to him, if he will point out to them a more easy and effectual method of awakening the consciences, and engaging the hearts, of the great men of this world. But the case is not altogether such as he has represented it. The abbé Dubois, indeed, his favourite guide, acknowledges that, of his three hundred converts, "two-thirds were pariahs, or beggars, and *all the rest* sudras, or vagrants, and outcasts of different tribes." The reason of this is obvious. It is not that "this honest Catholic" can be thought guilty "of principally attempting to convert, and [voluntarily] associating himself almost exclusively with, the very dregs of the people." Popery has shown itself too fond of the high places of the earth to be suspected of such heretical modesty. But the abbé held out allurements which beggars, vagrants, and outcasts, found very enticing, while he exhibited no motive strong enough to induce any man to break an honourable caste, or to make a single sacrifice for Chris-

tianity. The Baptist missionaries have asserted, not only different, but contrary things. Of their converts many are of the respectable castes, and not a few of the brahminical, which is the highest; while the instances are not rare in which the renunciation of caste, and the profession of Christianity, have been attended with such difficulties and privations as unequivocally indicated both the sincerity and the force of the motives under which they acted.

For this supposed systematical preference of the lower orders, the reviewer thinks "the Baptist missionaries will quote the example of our Saviour and his apostles."\* But he is mistaken. They will plead no example for what they do not practise, and still less that of our Saviour and his apostles for what was not practised by them. But that men of "humble character" may do much good, and religion spread when the higher orders discountenance it, is quite manifest from an appeal to the first propagation of Christianity. We do not forget the extraordinary gifts and miraculous powers of that age, nor do we lay claim to any participation in them; but we entertain the fullest conviction that they were perpetuated as long as there was any valuable end to be answered by them. At all events, we cannot agree with the reviewer in the opinion that the withdrawal of miraculous powers was the signal for the cessation of the triumphs of the Gospel, or that the achievement of its final and most glorious conquests is to be transferred from the antiquated instrumentality of supernatural endowments to the more modern and approved method of splendid dresses, pealing organs, pompous processions, and magnificent rites. It is generally supposed that Christianity has yet many victories to win; and one would think that the failure of the Popish priesthood, which is more magnificent and imposing than any other called Christian, might satisfy even

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\* "The Baptist missionaries will quote the example of our Saviour and his apostles, and appeal to the successful agency of humble instruments among the lower orders in the first amazing spread of Christianity through the Roman empire. Comparisons of this sort are often fallacious—the missionaries forget the miraculous powers and the extraordinary divine assistances which can alone account for the first progress of our religion, but which it has pleased God to deny to the preachers of the Gospel in these days. Yet we might urge, that it was not until the conversion of Constantine that polytheism received its deathblow in Europe."—*Quarterly Review*, lxx., p. 40.

the highest Churchman that little can be expected from a gorgeous ritual. We, for our part, look to the enlightening and renewing influence of the Holy Spirit, which alone, amidst all the conviction flashed on gainsayers by primitive miracles, wrought the saving wonders of the early age, and which is promised to attend, not splendid ceremonies, but the ministry of the Word of God, to the end of the world. We by no means undervalue the operation and influence of the higher orders. We should hail with delight a literal fulfilment of the prophecy that kings shall be nursing fathers and queens nursing mothers to the church; but, as there seems at present little reason to expect this, so it is delightful to know that the spread of the Gospel is altogether independent of it. It is not true, as the reviewer intimates, that every great change in society must begin with the superior classes, an opinion which betrays more absurdity of theory, and ignorance of fact, than could have been supposed to result even from high tory principles. We maintain, on the other hand, that the influence of the two portions of society is mutual, and that changes which are extensively wrought in either become powerfully felt in the other. If princes and great men will not forward the triumphs of Christianity, neither shall they obstruct them. If they will not lead, they shall be impelled. Nor are we by any means sure that the withholding of their influence is so much to be regretted. They have such a propensity to subject religion to secular authority, to enforce it by temporal sanctions, and to introduce into it their own inventions, that some mischief is almost sure to result from their interference with it. The conversion of Constantine, so far from exterminating Paganism, was rather the means of transferring it in a mass into Christianity, and contributed more than any other event to the perpetuity of the errors and vices which it is so fondly imagined to have destroyed. Of this, at all events, we entertain the most cheering persuasion, that, if it shall be said of the latest triumphs of Christianity, as it was of its earliest, "Not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble," are employed in them; it shall be added, too, that it is because "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, and the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and things that are despised, yea and things that are not, to bring to nought things that are."

The reviewer brings yet another accusation against the Baptist missionaries in the East. They have issued, it seems, "hasty," and therefore "useless," and even "pernicious," translations of the Scriptures.\* In making this attack he has certainly shown no want of courage. This is touching a point in which the Serampore missionaries have long been acknowledged to be illustrious by men of the highest rank, character, and learning, of all parties. Of late, indeed, a few persons (not learned persons, however) have thought proper to exclude themselves from the honour of sympathizing in the general eulogy, and among these our reviewer has certainly entitled himself to a bad pre-eminence. His assertions are not only, like the rest, ignorant and groundless, but they are actually more silly and audacious than them all. For example: "The versions abound with glaring mistakes, which render them absurd or ridiculous in the eyes of the natives; and, either by mis-spelling, misplacing, or misemploying words, the sense of the original is sometimes totally changed."† Before we have done with this veracious writer we shall adduce evidence to show that this is false in fact; but, quite independently of this, there is one consideration from which it will be obvious that it cannot be true. The translations have been effected by the assistance of learned natives of the countries in which the respective languages were spoken, by whom, in fact, as far as the diction is concerned, the ideas conveyed to them by the missionaries have been transfused, each into his own tongue. It is perfectly clear, therefore, that there *can* be no mis-spelling, misplacing, or misemploying of words, nor any mistakes adapted to render the Scriptures absurd or ridiculous in the eyes of the natives. To believe this, would require us to believe, also, that learned men in the East do not know how to use, to manage, or even to spell, their own language, or to convey their ideas without appearing absurd or ridiculous to their countrymen. It may be doubtful whether the native translator correctly receives and faithfully transfers the sentiments intended to be conveyed to him, but there can be no error in any other point, that is to say, not in any of the points which this sagacious reviewer has selected for his attack.

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\* Quarterly Review, lxx., p. 38.† *Ibid.*



Let us now examine the proofs—for such charges are too serious to be adduced without at least a show of proof—by which he endeavours to fortify his position. “Of this kind,” says he, “several instances are pointed out by the abbé Dubois.” He is verily remarkably fond of “this honest Catholic,” with whose loathing of missions one must suppose he has a powerful sympathy. But what will our readers say when we tell them, that he has been obliged to pervert and to falsify even the false and perverted statements of the abbé himself? The abbé Dubois adduces no instance from any translation executed by the missionaries at Serampore, of whom exclusively the reviewer is here speaking; nor from any translation that had ever been given to the world, or that was considered fit to be so by the author himself; but only from a few chapters circulated privately for the sake of critical emendation and remark. So much, therefore, for the “honest Catholic,” and the reviewer’s dishonest use of him. Next for the testimony of Dr. Carey himself, who, it seems, “has candidly admitted that, while he imagined his writings, preachings, and conversations, were all working well, he discovered with sorrow that the persons to whom they were addressed had either wholly mistaken their meaning, or retained no recollection of their substance.” The extreme relevancy of this admission is really surprising. It is to prove that the translations of the Scriptures are of a certain character; and here, accordingly, are introduced the “writings, preachings, and conversations” of Dr. Carey. It is to show that the Scriptures as translated at Serampore contain words “mis-spelt, misplaced, misemployed,” and “mistakes, which render them absurd or ridiculous to the natives;” all which, of course, is most conclusively established by their “mistaking the meaning, and retaining no recollection of the substance.” This is very well; only let the reviewer look to himself. For, if a reader’s retaining no recollection of the substance of a book, or even mistaking its meaning, be proof of its author mis-spelling, misplacing, and misemploying words, and committing such glaring mistakes as to become absurd or ridiculous, to say nothing of the English Bible and many other good books we could name, we really fear (though we shudder to say it) that all these things may be charged on the Quarterly Review itself. The candid admission of Dr. Carey is such as every minister

of the Gospel, and every other man who, by his writings or otherwise, endeavours to communicate instruction, will find cause to make; and it is most certain that it is one which he never intended to refer to the accuracy or intelligibility of the scriptural translations.

Upon this subject Dr. Carey and his coadjutors have emphatically declared the contrary, and in the Ninth Memoir of the Translations have adduced satisfactory evidence of their assertion. Here are the testimonies of men to whom the several languages are familiar; not, indeed, to the accuracy with which the sentiments of the Bible are transfused, a subject of which they could have no knowledge, but to the correctness, propriety, and intelligibility of the language itself, a point on which their testimony is decisive, and that on which the attack of the reviewer is directed. The following may sufficiently evince the tenor of these documents, which refer specifically to eighteen of the translations.

THE SUNGSKRIT. *The testimony of Ram-nath Vachusputee, chief Pundit of the College of Fort-William.*—"I have read the part of the holy book which you have sent me. The Sungskrit is perfectly correct. There are two or three trivial mistakes in the printing, but *there is no fault in the language and diction.*"

THE GOOJURATEE. *The testimony of Haloojee, Goojuratee Pundit in the College of Fort-William.*—"I have examined the book respecting which you have made inquiry of me. *The language is correct; if you doubt, let the book be sent to Goojurat; the people there will all understand it.* The only places in which they will find any difficulty will be those which contain the names of men and places."

THE ASSAMEE. *The testimony of three Assamee Brahmins studying at Nuddeya.*—"We have received the specimen of the Assamee Scriptures which you sent to us. We have read and understood it: *it is excellently done. Whoever of the Assam people shall read this book will understand it.*"\*

These testimonies the public will know how to weigh against the solitary one adduced by the reviewer,† of "a vakeel attached to one of our corps," who said that there were "some good stories and some bad:" which proves that

\* Ninth Memoir respecting the Translations and Editions of the Sacred Scriptures conducted by the Serampore Missionaries, 1823, pp. 10, 12, 19.

† Quarterly Review, lviii., p. 411.

the translation was so correct and idiomatic as to be quite intelligible; that there was "much nonsense" and "much he did not understand," which proves nothing but his ignorance and contempt of the Gospel; and, finally, that it was "very ill written," a point on which, beyond a doubt, every vakeel attached to our army in India must be infinitely better qualified to decide than the pundits in the college at Fort-William. How glad this reviewer would have been if the missionaries had sought, or relied upon, such evidence of the contrary!

The reader may now be satisfied to dispose, also, of the allegation that "the language" of the translations "is low and vulgar;" ‡ an imputation which is just as credible as that any man of learning should write a book which could be so characterized. We find, however, that the reviewer means nothing more than that it is faithful and plain; for he immediately proceeds to put them in honourable contrast with those of the Jesuits, which, he tells us, "are esteemed among the Brahmins as classical works," because they have thrown the simple narratives of Scripture into fine passages of "poetry," exciting "universal admiration." And this, we suppose, by way of closely resembling "the majestic simplicity of the original, and of our own excellent translation," from which (according to him) the versions of the missionaries are so deplorably remote.

It now becomes a very curious question how the reviewer, not only without evidence, but contrary to evidence, and to the nature of the case itself, could have invented and brought forward such charges. Aware that the art and mystery of reviewing is very profound, we might hesitate to propose a solution of this problem. We venture, however, to suggest that, being determined to cry down the translations, he began, not by searching extensively for facts, but by employing his imagination on the very, very, few with which he happened to be acquainted. Knowing that a large number were announced in a short period, he pronounces them "hasty;" he has logic enough next to conduct him to the conclusion that a hasty translation is likely to be "imperfect;" and then he divines that the imperfections likely to be found in hasty translations into strange and

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‡ Quarterly Review, lviii., p. 411.

difficult languages, are "words mis-spelt, misplaced, and misemployed," together with "glaring mistakes, rendering them absurd or ridiculous in the eyes of natives." And really, as an effort of imagination, to say nothing of the profound ratiocination, it is rather creditable to him, though probably suggested by his recollection, perhaps very recent, of the French exercises of his boyhood. But we have not the smallest desire to detract from the merit of his performance; we only request of our readers that, while they yield all due praise to the reviewer, they will do the missionaries the justice to recollect that it is altogether a fiction.

The missionaries, however, "after a very few years' application, translated and circulated portions of the Scriptures," "in no less than twenty-seven different languages."\* And this is their crime! It is not only the tremendous wickedness, but the vast diversity, of the charges brought against these men that surprises us. At one time they are charged with having done too little, at another with having done too much. One man puffs at the seven-and-twenty translations, and says the pretended languages are merely dialects; another tells you they are "twenty-seven different languages," and it is impossible there can be any merit in the execution—they must abound with glaring mistakes, be mis-spelt, and absurd. The reviewer himself is first very angry that the missionaries "are not satisfied unless the work of an age be compressed into the space of a day;"† and then yet more angry that, "in the space of a day," they seem actually to have done "the work of an age;" while he, poor man, gravely goes about to account for the "failure" of their labours. It is, at least, one consolation beneath this accumulation of obloquy, that all cannot be true; and, indeed, the contradictoriness of the two parts goes far towards making nugatory the whole, and constraining us to acquiesce with this same Quarterly Review, when in sober seriousness it speaks of the missionaries as having shown "unequalled learning," and being endowed as with "the gift of tongues."‡ As we have proved, however, that in point of fact the translations have not the imperfections charged upon them, it may easily be shown, also, that their execution, while reflecting great honour on the ability and

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\* Quarterly Review, lxx., p. 38.

† Quarterly Review, lviii., p. 44.

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. I., p. 224.

industry of the missionaries, involves nothing miraculous or unaccountable. The Marquis Wellesley had surrounded himself at Calcutta with learned natives from various provinces of India. Upon his return, and at the very period when the Serampore missionaries were ardently bent upon the translation of the Scriptures, these pundits (as they are called) were for the most part disengaged. Instruments for their purpose were thus provided, without expense, difficulty, or delay; a circumstance which not only encouraged them in the labours actually begun or contemplated, but which induced them also to extend their views much farther, namely, to all the languages with which these pundits were conversant as natives. Far from being a project of mere incompetent ambition, the idea of attempting so many versions was never conceived, till divine providence had presented to them the means by which it was manifest it might be accomplished. And the men were truly fitted for their work; being not only learned in their native tongues, but thoroughly versed in either the Sungskrit, which is the parent of a great number of the Eastern dialects, or the Bengalee, or the Hindee, with all which the missionaries had become well acquainted. It is obvious how easily one missionary might convey to any number of such pundits the import of the Sacred Scriptures, and the pundits transfuse it into as many different languages in a comparatively short time, without any glaring mistakes, or anything absurd or ridiculous, or a single word mis-spelt, misplaced, or misemployed. The translations were sure to be idiomatic and correct; it only remained to be certain that they were faithful. For this the pundits could give no security. They might misunderstand the missionaries, or might find no words adequately expressive of the ideas they received. It was provided for, however, by the progress made in the knowledge of these languages by the missionaries themselves, which, though it would not have enabled them to make a correct and idiomatic translation, fully qualified them to examine and ascertain the import of every word, and its adaptation to convey the idea of the original. It is thus, then, that, with talent and industry, great but not superhuman, the work has been done, and well done. Or, if it be not well done, we challenge a fair and full investigation. The missionary translations are before the world, and there



are men of profound learning able to enter fully into their merits. They would furnish no dishonourable article for the *Quarterly Review*, though we suspect the present reviewer would find himself incompetent to the task. If, however, it be as he has had the hardihood to assert, it is the duty of the editor to engage a more worthy hand, and to expose, in a manner that shall be satisfactory and convincing, the words mis-spelt, misplaced, and misemployed, together with the total changes of meaning, and the glaring mistakes that render the Scriptures absurd or ridiculous in the eyes of the natives. This, if it be so, is a grievous evil, convicting the missionaries of something much "worse" than a "want of discretion," and the religious world of egregious folly, and a participation in their crime. We are unfeignedly desirous of the extermination of such an evil. We require nothing but a fair trial, and, in the meantime, only beseech the public not to lend itself to the views of a calumniator. And we are assured they will not. We should be almost ashamed, indeed, of having taken so much notice of these calumnies, did we not know that their influence may be greater than their truth, and that their being unanswered might be construed into a confirmation of them. The enemies of missions, and the bigoted partisans of the Establishment, may rejoice even in such poor authority for believing what they wish to be true; and the *Quarterly Review* itself may not have manliness, or generosity, or integrity, enough to make any amends for this wanton and groundless attack. But, with a liberal and discerning public, the rebound will inflict a greater injury on this journal itself than the blow on the objects of its hostility. And, until better evidence has been adduced than has yet been brought forward in any quarter,\* Christian missions in India, of which Serampore is but one—happily associated, however, with many others, which would equally suffer by the attack, and are equally contemplated in the defence—will continue to receive the warm and vigorous support of the religious world. The sound which announces the onset of their foe will but arouse the courage and the zeal of their friends.

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\* Full information respecting the Baptist Missions in the East may be found in the works already quoted, in the *Periodical Accounts* and *Annual Reports* of the Baptist Missionary Society; the *Memoirs* respecting the Translations conducted at Serampore, and Mr. Ward's Farewell Letters: and an excellent reply to the most recent calumnies, in the *Eclectic Review* for December, 1825, Art. II.

A LETTER TO THE RIGHT HON. LORD BEXLEY,  
PRESIDENT OF THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN  
BIBLE SOCIETY.

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MY LORD,—

NEARLY forty years ago, certain Christian missionaries in India—the Baptist missionaries at Serampore—commenced the arduous work of translating the Sacred Scriptures into the languages of the East; a work which has endeared them to the whole Christian church, which has placed them among the noblest benefactors of the world, and which has been perpetuated by the successive labours of men scarcely less eminent than the father of Bengalee literature himself. To this work the attention of the British and Foreign Bible Society was warmly directed, in the earliest period of its history; and, for a long period, the aid of liberal donations was unhesitatingly granted to it. Recently this aid has been refused; and it is to the causes, character, and consequences, of this refusal, that I beg to draw your lordship's attention.

About the year 1830, three of the Pædobaptist missionaries then in India (now deceased) wrote to the Bible Society in England, requesting them not to give assistance to any Indian version in which the word "baptize" was translated to "immerse."\* When, at a subsequent period, the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society applied for the aid so long and so uniformly rendered by that of the Bible Society to their Eastern versions, the effect of this letter was immediately felt. It had created an embarrassment which it was not easy to remove. The Committee of the Parent Society would have voted the customary grant without hesitation—for on this point they had never hesitated—had it not been for the objection from abroad. They did not like to grieve, either the Baptist body in England, or the Pædobaptists in India; and, fearful of taking any step themselves, they referred the matter to the Committee of the Calcutta Auxiliary.† Whether they did this with a hope that

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\* Annual Report of the Baptist Missionary Society, 1834, p. 29. Appendix.

† "That the above application, respecting an edition of the Bengalee New Testament, be referred to the Committee of the Calcutta Auxiliary

the Auxiliary would decide in favour of the established usage, or whether they would have been pleased with such a decision, I will not take upon myself to assert; but it cannot be deemed uncharitable in me to say, that I incline to answer both these questions in the affirmative. If they had such a wish or expectation, however, they were disappointed. Shortly after receiving the communication from this country, the Committee at Calcutta gave it to be clearly understood, by a passage in their Report to the Annual Meeting, that they should encourage no version of the Scriptures, however well it might be executed, in which the word "baptize" was rendered to "immerse."\*

The weight which the Parent Society had desired to remove from their own shoulders to that of their Auxiliary was thus, thrown back to its original position; and the Committee at home had to come to a final settlement of the business, with the additional disadvantage of a previous and questionable decision abroad. It is believed—and it is no dishonour to them to believe—that they sincerely regretted this state of the case. They yielded, however, to the difficulties of their position. Application having been made by the Baptist Missionary Society, at the close of 1832, for aid towards Mr. Yates's Bengalee version, the subject was discussed at various times; and on the 1st of July, 1833, was passed the following memorable resolution:—"That this Committee would cheerfully afford assistance to the missionaries connected with the Baptist Missionary Society in their translation of the Bengalee New Testament, provided the Greek terms relating to baptism be rendered, either, according to the principle adopted by the translators of the English authorized version, by a word derived from the original, or by such terms as may be considered unobjectionable by the other denominations of Christians composing the Bible Society." Although courteously worded, this resolution is evidently an affirmation of the position taken at Calcutta—namely, that no versions should be encouraged in which the word "baptize" is rendered to "immerse."†

Notwithstanding the adoption of this resolution, some circumstances induced the renewal of correspondence on the subject in the commencement of the year 1836. Desirous to maintain

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Society, with authority to contribute towards the expense of an edition, should they be of opinion that it ought to be encouraged by this Society."  
—*Resolution of B. and F. Bible Society.*

\* Bap. Miss. Report, 1834, p. 30. Appendix.

† This resolution was framed and brought forward by the late Rev. Joseph Hughes, one of the Secretaries of the Society, and a Baptist. Of no man would I speak with a more unfeigned respect. But it is well known that Mr. Hughes's views on the subject of baptism were in some degree modified, or kept in abeyance, by his extreme solicitude to avoid giving offence to others.

harmony, if possible, both at home and abroad, among fellow-Christians engaged in the great and necessary work of circulating the Word of God among all nations, the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society at that period appointed a deputation to wait upon your lordship; and, after that interview, a modified proposition was submitted to the Committee of the Bible Society, requesting "a grant for the purpose of furnishing our missionaries with a small supply of the version as completed by Mr. Yates, *for the use of the churches and congregations connected with our Society.*" The Committee declined complying with this request; thus adhering entirely and inflexibly to their original resolution.

It cannot surprise your lordship to be told that, by this step, the Baptist body in England are seriously aggrieved. Nor can it be doubted by your lordship that they are so; since there has been presented, not only a protest against the offensive decision by the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society, but a second document of a similar description, originated by a body\* which represents no inconsiderable portion of the denomination, and signed by no fewer than five hundred and forty-four of its ministers. The latter document was intended to be, in the first instance, of a private nature; and that it was not so was owing to a circumstance which implicated an individual only, and on which I do not wish to animadvert in terms of severity. As its presentation has led to no result (the Committee of the Bible Society declining to reconsider their decision), it remains now that the matter should be laid before the public, and more especially before the constituency of that noble institution of which your lordship is the President, and in the prosperity of which the body to which I belong has hitherto had an equal interest with any other denomination of Christians.

In proceeding to examine the character of the decision in question, I am, to a certain extent, relieved of difficulty, by the circumstance that the Committee of the Bible Society have themselves assigned the reasons for it in the following resolutions, officially communicated to the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society:—

"Resolved,—That, while it is rarely expedient to assign reasons for the adoption of particular measures, the present instance may be regarded as an exception; a special request having been made by the Rev. J. Dyer, on behalf of the Baptist Missionary Society, to be furnished with a statement embodying some of the arguments adduced in the course of the discussion; and that the following may be selected out of the various considerations on which the resolution of this Committee is grounded, viz.:—

"*First*, While this sub-Committee give full credit to the friends of the Baptist Missionary Society that they are actuated

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\* The Baptist Union.



by conscientious motives in urging the duty of translating the original terms, and rendering them by terms signifying immersion, this sub-Committee are bound to give credit, also, to the motives of others, who no less conscientiously and uprightly believe that the original terms in the Greek do not necessarily and always imply washing by *immersion*.

"*Secondly*, That, inasmuch as this Society itself, and its Committees and sub-Committees, are composed of persons holding on this subject widely different opinions, and it is no part of the duty of the Committees or sub-Committees to adjust such differences of opinion, it seemed most desirable to fall back upon the practice resorted to in the English and other versions.

"*Thirdly*, That they feel more encouraged in recommending this course, inasmuch as the practice of not translating the word βαπτίζω leaves the matter without prejudice to any; while the adoption of a contrary course would, at least, wear the appearance of a disposition to favour the views of one body of Christians at the expense of those of others.

"*Fourthly*, That, in assigning these reasons, it is not meant to convey the idea that each and all of them were felt alike by such members of this sub-Committee as united in the recommendation to decline the aid requested, some having been influenced by one consideration, and others by another."\*

It appears, then, from this document, in the first place, that there are certain grounds upon which the Committee do *not* rest their justification. They say, indeed, that the reasons assigned are "selected out of the various considerations on which the resolution" was grounded; but it is evident that there are some considerations of such decisive weight and power that, if they had been deemed relevant to the case, they would certainly have been adduced. Such, for example, is the CONSTITUTION of the Society, either in form, or in principle; such, likewise, is the *usage* of the Society, whether uniform, or general; and such, in fine, is the existence of *precedents*, even if a single one only had been found. No one can believe that, if an argument could have been derived from either of these sources, it would have been omitted on such an occasion; or that any persons could be more competent to judge whether an argument could be derived from them than the sub-Committee by whom these "reasons" were prepared. I may safely assume, therefore, that these gentlemen did not, in any measure, ground their resolution upon either precedent, practice, or principle; and that they knew they could not. It was not that they overlooked this position, they abandoned it. There can be no need, then, for me to dispute it, or to provide any other rebuke for those indiscreet friends of the Bible Society who have attempted to occupy it than is supplied by the silent wisdom of the Committee.

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\* Bap. Miss. Report, 1836, pp. 31, 32. Appendix.



In the next place, it is equally obvious that the "selected" considerations must have been those which the Committee regarded as the strongest. It would have been infatuation to have chosen the weaker arguments, when stronger were at hand. Upon what topics, then, let me inquire, has the selection alighted?

The Committee set out with telling us that they "give credit to the motives" of non-immersionists. Why, my lord, so do we, and quite as cordially. But what has this to do with the matter? Do the Committee mean to say that, if they were to encourage an immersionist version, this would imply a suspicion of *the motives* of Christians differently minded? But, perhaps, this "first" reason is intended to stand for nothing by itself, but to prop up the rest. I therefore proceed.

The Committee inform us, in the next place, that, as the Bible Society consists of persons holding, on the subject of baptism, widely different opinions, and, as it is no part of the duty of its Committees to adjust this difference, "it seemed most desirable to fall back upon the practice resorted to in the English and other versions." This item presents, certainly, some very intelligible matter for animadversion.

And, first, when the Committee speak of "*the practice resorted to in the English and other versions,*" in relation to the word βαπτίζω (baptize), they seem to assume that some common practice in this respect exists in them *all*. This is certainly not the case. The English and *some* other versions transfer the term βαπτίζω (baptize) into their respective languages; but not a few translate it, and translate it variously by terms denoting to immerse, to wash, to sprinkle, to christen. As the Committee must have known this, their *meaning* doubtless is, that they thought it desirable to fall back upon the practice resorted to by "the English and *some* other versions;" that, namely, of transferring the word βαπτίζω (baptize), instead of translating it. But this more accurate mode of stating the case takes away a part of the seeming strength of their position, inasmuch as it destroys the insinuated (though not asserted) uniformity of the practice on which they tell us they have "fallen back." If the practice of transferring βαπτίζω (baptize) had been uniform, it might have afforded them some support; but as a partial practice, and one departed from by all parties, it is obviously but a broken reed.

Secondly, the assertion thus made by the Committee is a mistake, and indicates an entire forgetfulness of the fact. They have fallen back, they say, on "*the practice*" of transferring the word βαπτίζω (baptize). Now their previous resolution makes this only one part of an alternative; since it requires that the terms relating to baptism should be rendered, "*either by a word derived from the original, or by such terms as may be considered unobjectionable by the other denominations of Christians composing the*

*Bible Society.*" It is an incorrect account of their proceedings, therefore, to say that they have fallen back on the practice of the English version; inasmuch as our translators would most readily be excused from conforming to that practice, if they would adopt a term "unobjectionable to the other bodies of Christians composing the Bible Society." It cannot be necessary to assure your lordship that I impute no falsification to the sub-Committee. It may be an error of inadvertency, or it may be an intentional abandonment of one of the positions formerly taken. In the latter point of view I should be most happy to regard it; but, as I have no authority for doing so, I must set it down as an error, and guard against the unfairness of its tendency, which evidently is to throw one part of the subject out of sight.

Thirdly, supposing, for the present, that the Committee *had* fallen back on the practice of the English version, their alleged reasons for it are futile. First, we are told, that the Bible Society consists of persons holding different opinions on the subject of baptism. Very true; and the members of the Bible Society hold different opinions on many subjects besides, and on subjects as strongly affecting the translation of the Scriptures. Have the Committee ever thought it necessary to pursue a similar plan with respect to these differences? All the world knows they have not. And it is yet to be shown, my lord, what peculiarity there is in the subject of baptism, that the differences of opinion relating to this ordinance must be treated in so singular and offensive a manner. We are informed, secondly, that it is no part of the duty of the Committee of the Bible Society to adjust the difference of opinion among its members in relation to baptism. Clearly not. But why, then, do they not let it alone, and permit both parties, as in the case of innumerable other differences, to translate according to their own conscientious views of the meaning? Falling back on the practice of transferring the word βαπτίζω (baptize) *is attempting to adjust the difference*; the very thing which they tell us it is not their duty to do.

But, fourthly, there is another way in which it is a mistake to say that the Committee of the Bible Society had fallen back on the practice of the English version. With respect to the *Indian immersionist* versions, they have now done so; but they have not done so with respect to other versions. They have aided Dr. Morrison's Chinese version, in which βαπτίζω (baptize) is not transferred, but translated by a term denoting to "wash;" they have aided Peter Jones's Chippewa version, in which βαπτίζω is not transferred, but translated by a term denoting to "sprinkle;" and they have aided the Dutch, Danish, German, Syrian, Arabic, Coptic, and others, in all which βαπτίζω (baptize) is not transferred, but translated by terms denoting to "immerse." And, what is more remarkable than all, the Episcopalians in India have translated the word; Thomason in his Arabic version, and Martyn in

his Hindustani and Persian versions. With one exception, every version yet executed in the East has translated βαπτίζω (baptize);\* and a large edition with the word translated to "wash" has been issued by the Pædobaptists at Calcutta, *since* the decision of the Bible Society. And yet they tell us they have fallen back on the practice of the English version! Will they be consistent, my lord, and withdraw their assistance from every version which does not transfer βαπτίζω (baptize)? Or are there any grounds on which the Indian Baptist translations are to be singled out from the rest, for the process of reduction to the newly and capriciously adopted standard?

From the tenor of their third particular, one might almost infer that the Committee would embrace the former branch of this alternative. "They feel more encouraged," they tell us, "in recommending this course [the transfer of the word βαπτίζω (baptize)], inasmuch as" it "leaves the matter without prejudice to any; while the adoption of a contrary course would, at least, wear the appearance of a disposition to favour the views of one body of Christians at the expense of those of others." This liberality, my lord, is very amiable, and I do not mean to insinuate that it is not sincere. I am not able to see, however, how an unwillingness "to favour the views of one body of Christians at the expense of those of others," could have dictated their refusal to make a grant for the purpose of providing a supply of Testaments *for the members of Baptist churches*. Nor can I see how any such partiality could be charged on a free permission to *all* bodies of Christians to translate according to their own conscience. It seems to me, that to insist on the transfer of the word βαπτίζω (baptize) is to do the very mischief they declare their wish to avoid; inasmuch as the word "baptize" has, by long use, acquired a meaning, and, by the general practice of sprinkling, is generally taken as meaning to sprinkle. To insist upon the use of it, therefore, is to do a prejudice to those who differ from this opinion; and it is diametrically opposed, in effect, to the liberality professed by the Committee.

If, however, the Committee really feel what they have here written, it must surely be expected of them to extend the discipline they have commenced in Bengal to the rest of the world. To aid versions which translate βαπτίζω (baptize), they assure us, will "wear an appearance of a disposition to favour the views of one body of Christians at the expense of those of others." It cannot be in India alone that such an appearance is revolting to them. It must equally shock them in China, in Persia, in Polynesia, in North America, in Europe; and, therefore, neither immersionist nor non-immersionist Bibles can any longer be

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\* Letter of Rev. W. Yates. *Bap. Mag.*, July, 1837, p. 305.

patronized by this truly catholic Committee. We shall see no more grants for the authorized versions of the Dutch, Danish, Abyssinian, and other churches, until the word βαπτίζω (baptize) is transferred into them, instead of being translated; and orders will be immediately issued to the same effect to the Chippewa territory, and the celestial empire.

My lord, it can scarcely be necessary for me to say that I do not believe a single tittle of all this will come to pass. I can but faintly picture to myself the amazement of the venerable national establishments to which I have referred—none of them less ancient, some of them much more ancient, than the Church of England herself—if such a communication were made to them; and the marvellings at their own presumption with which this very Committee would be smitten, were they to detect themselves gravely entertaining the thought of doing so. Even the Chinese and the Chippewa versions are identified with bodies too important to be rudely handled in this matter. I do not believe that the Committee will insist on reducing to “the practice of the English version” even the Pædobaptist versions in India itself. The fact is that, in the present proceeding, the Baptist Indian translations are singled out from the rest, and treated, not on the ground alleged by the Committee, but on one concealed and peculiar.

That I am not speaking at random in making this assertion will readily appear. No reluctance was shown in England to aid immersionist translations in the East, *until some Pædobaptist missionaries had suggested and pressed it*. This was the cause of the hesitation subsequently manifested, and of the refusal finally given. Hence the reference of the matter to the Calcutta Auxiliary, in hope, probably, that good feeling on the spot would set the question at rest; hence their well known chagrin on finding that the burden reverted to their own shoulders; and hence, also, the language of their original resolution—requiring, either a conformity to the practice of the English version, or the rendering of βαπτίζω (baptize) by a term “unobjectionable to the other denominations of Christians composing the Bible Society.” I may conclude my examination of these “selected” considerations, therefore, with observing, first, that they do not disclose the real grounds of action at all; and, secondly, that the ill success of the Committee in this instance strikingly illustrates their own assertion, that “it is rarely expedient to assign reasons for particular measures.”

The real ground on which the Committee proceeded was the discontent of certain Pædobaptists at Calcutta. Your lordship will permit me to inquire, for a moment, how far their resolution was either justifiable, or expedient, in relation to it.

The step suggested by the Pædobaptist missionaries who stirred in this business was by no means inconsiderable, or unimportant



To refuse aid to immersionist translations was to adopt a measure neither demanded by the constitution of the Society, nor sanctioned by its usages. It was something quite new, and not only wholly unlike, but absolutely contrary to, what had been done through the whole history of the Society, and in every department of its labours. It was adapted to check the operations of a body of translators of acknowledged eminence and worth, and to throw suspicion and discredit on the translations themselves. It was sure, at the same time, to wound the feelings of an entire body of Christians at home; a body of Christians entering as no unkindly or unimportant element into the composition of the Society itself, which was thus threatened with laceration and division. For such a step as this there ought plainly to have existed a strong and substantial reason. The reason actually was the dissatisfaction of certain Pædobaptists at Calcutta. What were the grounds of this dissatisfaction?

If candour required me to assume that the dissatisfaction of the Pædobaptists in Calcutta arose from a pure regard to truth, I might still observe that their zeal has shown itself, in this case, under circumstances exposing it strongly to suspicion. It is no secret that Baptist missionaries were labouring in India long before Pædobaptist missionaries were; and that, in the work of scriptural translation, they are, in point of time, far ahead of their brethren. Of course, the Pædobaptists have no sectarian jealousies. To find the country deluged with immersionist New Testaments would be no grief to them, as tending to give a preponderance to the Baptist denomination in India. But have they been wise to show their zeal for God in such suspicious circumstances, and to give an occasion for its being said, "This is nothing but party spirit"?

I might, also, take the liberty of a Christian brother who confesses the corruption of his own heart, and suggest to them the importance of examining whether their regard to truth, in this case, is quite so free from admixture as they may have supposed. I might beg them to ask themselves whether the relative situation of parties has really had nothing to do with their anxiety; and what they would have thought and said of any Baptists who, in similar circumstances with themselves, had adopted a similar measure.

Or, to pass these topics, I might say, first, that the supposed error was not of such a kind that the constitution of the Society allowed notice to be taken of it; and, secondly, that the feeling of the complainants, if worthy of regard within certain limits, did not justify indulgence to such an extent. If it did so in one case, of course it would do so in another. Let us suppose, then, this jealousy for truth to become equally strong in all places, and in all denominations. Let Pædobaptists begin to complain *everywhere* when immersionist versions show themselves under the



patronage of the Bible Society; let Baptists imbibe the same spirit, and express a like dissatisfaction; let Lutherans and Calvinists, Presbyterians and Episcopalians, Romanists and Protestants, glow with an equal ardour for truth, and demand respectively the withholding of all grants for the circulation of antagonist versions;—and in what condition is the Bible Society, if it acts in all these cases as it has acted in Bengal? And why should it not? Could it consistently refuse to do so? Or what security is there against the breaking out of such a fury for truth, especially since a bounty is offered on its manifestation? The answer to such a general strife would doubtless be, “The Society will aid all evangelical versions; and within this limit we know nothing of your differences.” And such *ought* to have been the answer of the Committee to the Calcutta complainants, even on the supposition of their being actuated by a pure regard to truth.

Not by the largest exercise of charity, however, am I called upon to make such a supposition. The parties who have urged the refusal of aid to our translations have always, however tacitly, admitted them to be faithful. They have never said, nor attempted to say, that “to immerse” is not a just rendering of βαπτίζω (baptize); nor that, in scriptural translation, it conveys anything but the mind of God. They have gone no further than to maintain that it is not *the only* faithful rendering; and, accordingly, in the exercise of their judgment, they have translated it to “wash.” The proceedings of the Committee of the Bible Society agree with this statement of the case. None of their resolutions casts an imputation on the fidelity of the Baptist translators, or of immersionist translations. They go no further than to claim conscientiousness for the non-immersionists. This claim is fully allowed on our part. But let us see how the matter is thus left. According to the showing of the Calcutta Pædobaptists, here are two renderings of βαπτίζω (baptize)—to “immerse,” and to “wash”—both of which are faithful, and both conscientiously adopted by the respective translators; and in these circumstances they resist the support of the immersionist version. That is to say, they resist the support of what they admit to be a faithful translation of the Word of God! And this under pretence of a pure zeal for his truth! But, no. I must do them justice. They have set up no such pretence. They have said, not that the immersionist versions are unfaithful, but only that they are disagreeable.

For the disagreeableness of the immersionist versions of the Scriptures to the Calcutta Pædobaptists, I know of no assignable reason but one; it is denominational rivalry. And there cannot exist a doubt of the manner in which the Committee should have treated it. It should have been regarded as an exhibition of unchristian feeling, immediately to be rebuked and put down. Nothing could more justly deserve rebuke; nothing could it be

more truly mischievous to pamper. Nor could anything be more derogatory to the dignity of a great and catholic society, comprehending in its vast embrace of love both the church and the world, than to be seen thus descending to protect and encourage an ebullition of petty jealousy towards a rival sect. This is "favouring the views of one denomination of Christians at the expense of those of another" with a mighty hand; and cannot but be deemed surpassingly strange in a body of men who have expressed so intense a dread of "wearing the appearance of a disposition" to do so.

It is further to be observed, that the course which the Committee of the Bible Society have taken identifies them, in this matter, with the complainants at Calcutta. *That Committee* are now withholding aid from versions of the Scriptures acknowledged by themselves to be faithful. Intrusted by the public with the disposal of about a hundred thousand pounds annually for the diffusion of the Holy Scriptures, and the encouragement of all faithful and intelligible versions, they perseveringly deny assistance to one of the best executed of all modern versions in the East, and one of unquestioned and unquestionable fidelity! This is no matter of mere Baptist and Pædobaptist controversy. It is a question of the reverence due to inspired truth. I have here to ask, Does the Committee, do the constituencies of the Bible Society, does your lordship, stand in awe of the Word of God? And is it compatible with such reverence to place obstructions in the way of what is acknowledged to be a faithful transfusion of it into the languages of the nations?

I have thus far considered the *justice* of the resolution of the Committee; permit me, further, to investigate its *expediency*. And here I maintain that, if it could be justified, it could not be shown to be wise. They attempt to "adjust the difference" respecting *Baptism*, by recommending the transfer of the Greek word; but what can they do towards adjusting the numerous other differences, doctrinal and ecclesiastical, which exist between the different sections of the religious world? There are as stubborn diversities of opinion concerning the words ἐπίσκοπος (bishop), πρεσβύτερος (elder), and ἐκκλησία (church), as there can be about βαπτίζω (baptize); and if the party strife notoriously existing respecting the proper rendering of them were to come before the Committee of the Bible Society,\* are we to suppose that they would direct these words likewise to be transferred, instead of being translated? What

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\* "Disputes have already commenced about the term bishop, &c."—*Mr. Yates's Letter. Bap. Mag., July, p. 305.* "As was to be expected since the Bible Society interfered about Baptism, the words above referred to are become the subject of difficulty; and the brethren in India, instead of translating the original terms for all of them, are at this moment about to introduce the Greek words into the native languages." *Letter of W. H. Pearce, in the same, p. 307.*

would they then do with τεταγμένοις (ordained), and προέγνω (to foreknow)? Must these be transferred into the languages of the pagans too? And where would they stop? Or where, consistently, could they stop, until they had forbidden the translation of every disputed term, and ordered them all to be transferred into every language under heaven? And all this to make the Bible intelligible to the heathen! So, for example, with the passage (Acts xiii. 48), "As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed." Because a Calvinist understands the word "ordained" (τεταγμένοις) as referring to the purpose of God, and an Arminian as referring to the disposition of men, the Bible Society Committee, upon the case being brought before them, will adjudge that the word be not translated, but transferred; and that the pagans, by way of having an intelligible Bible, be taught that, "As many as were tetagmenæd to eternal life believed"! In the case of βαπτίζω (baptize), the Committee "fall back on the practice of the English version." But would this satisfy the Presbyterian, the Congregationalist, or the Lutheran? We have a long list of ecclesiastical terms which King James ordered our translators to retain, right or wrong; and we know the fraudulent design with which πᾶσχα (passover) has been translated *Easter* (Acts xii. 4). And is *this* version to be made in every point the standard for all new translations, and its admitted errors and defects to be propagated, without remedy, under the whole heaven? It is impossible.

I have now done, my lord, with the first branch of the alternative offered us by the Committee. I come next to the second. And if the first is bad, the second is far worse. We are recommended to render βαπτίζω (baptize) by a term "*which may not be considered objectionable* by the other denominations of Christians composing the Bible Society." It would be wrong, doubtless, to give *unnecessary* offence; nor, so far as appears, have our brethren been accused of it. The word they have used to denote immersion is as inoffensive as any word can be which denotes the same thing; while it is very well known that no word meaning immersion would be considered "unobjectionable." The recommendation of the Committee, therefore, goes upon the principle that the primary object of a translator should be conciliation rather than fidelity—that he should seek to please men rather than God—that he should sacrifice truth to love! Strange and fearful doctrine! No. Precious as love is, it must not be purchased at the sacrifice of truth. Nor could any love which is worth possessing be purchased at such a cost. A man who could make such a sacrifice to the good opinion of his brethren would only deserve to be despised, and he would soon meet with his desert. The dignity and value of truth, the authority of God, the welfare of immortal souls, all forbid this guilty and fatal surrender. Most deeply do I deplore that, in such an age as the present, when the

translation of the Holy Scriptures is carried on by so many hands, and into so many languages, the sentiment on which I am remarking should have been promulgated, and more especially from a quarter so likely to be influential. With me, denominational considerations are as nothing in comparison with my desire to extract this element of poison from the fountain of biblical translation. In the name of all that is honest and faithful, either towards God, himself, or his fellow-sinner, let *every man* who is employed in this work *render every word into what he believes to be its meaning*. In what way else is any translator to clear his conscience? Or in what way else is any satisfactory approach to be made towards giving to the nations the "lively oracles" of God?

Let it only be supposed that a translator of the Word of God takes the recommendation given him by the Committee, and ponders at every step whether the words he is employing will "be considered objectionable" by Christians of other denominations; what must be the result of this? It will introduce into his proceedings an element directly destructive of his fidelity. Instead of inquiring simply, What does the Scripture mean? he will have to ask, What will my brethren like? Instead of conforming his work to the mind of God, he will bend it to the views of his fellow-Christians. How intolerable this must be to men of upright mind! Place an Episcopalian translator among Congregationalists, and he must not render ἐκκλησία "church," nor ἐπίσκοπος; "bishop;" but "congregation," and "overseer." Place a Congregationalist translator among Episcopalians, and he must, in equal violation of his conscience, say "bishop," and "church." Let but this rule be applied to the whole work of translation and the whole body of translators, and it would inflict upon them a torture absolutely intolerable. They would rise against it as one man, and sweep it away with irresistible indignation. On such a principle no honest man could endure the occupation. But this is not the worst. A source of corruption would thus be opened within the very fountain of the water of life. To the whole extent of this influence, the character of a *translator* would be utterly forfeited and destroyed, and he who *should be* a translator would be composing a work of his own; and yet not of his own, but of the sentiments of those around him. It would be impossible to carry out such a principle through a version of the whole Bible, without producing a corrupted volume, deserving rather to be called a caricature, than a copy, of the Word of God. It would also follow in this method, that, while every translation of the Scriptures would be corrupt, even these corruptions would have no uniformity. As the fellow-Christians influencing translators in different parts of the earth will be of endless diversity, so must the translations be; till, ultimately, the Bible will be like a chameleon, having no colour of its own, but reflecting the hues of the objects which surround it. How far God would be



honoured by such a process, or what would become of the purity and authority of his eternal truth, I need not say; nor will I say more on so painful a subject than this, that the havoc would be the more melancholy for being, not the achievement of the great enemy of God and man, nor of wicked men devoted to his service: not the result of the infirmities of good men, failing to carry into perfect operation the intentions of an upright heart; but the issue of misguided friendship, the purchase of unparalleled liberality, the recommendation of the Bible Society!

I now dismiss this resolution of the Committee; the first branch of which goes to give the heathen no translation at all, the second to give them a corrupt one. I will only add, on this subject, that the operations of translators, and of printers of existing translations, require to be regarded with a watchful eye. A disposition to tamper with ancient versions already begins to appear among some non-immersionist brethren abroad. It has been stated by Mr. W. H. Pearce, lately from Calcutta, that an edition of the Armenian New Testament has not long ago been printed at Shiraz, with the word βαπτίζω (baptize) for the first time transferred; the word, in all former editions, having been translated by a term denoting immersion. And this at the expense of the Bible Society, which aids the printing of the edition! To commence a practice of altering the ancient versions, while retaining their names, is carrying the matter somewhat too far.

I am bound to acknowledge, indeed, and I do so most readily, that the alteration I have now mentioned is probably unauthorized by the Committee of the Bible Society. The case is, most likely, the same with the Chinese and Chippewa versions already adverted to. I may be told that this is inevitable—that the Committee cannot be acquainted with the details of every translation they assist. And I fully grant it. But this very thing shows into what an absurd position they have thrust themselves. They have fallen back, they say, upon the practice of transferring the word βαπτίζω (baptize), and will encourage no versions which deviate from it. Then they *oblige* themselves to inquire concerning every translation they assist, not only whether it is generally faithful and intelligible, but what plan has been adopted with the particular word βαπτίζω (baptize). They thus create a new department of labour, and set themselves up, *quoad hoc*, for the very last things in the world which it was intended they should become—critics and philologists.\*

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\* How satisfactorily the office of critics and philologists might be executed by sub-Committees of the Bible Society, may be gathered from the specimen of their skill in this department afforded by a document already quoted. The sub-Committee tell us, that “the original terms in the Greek do not necessarily and always imply washing by *immersion*.” This is evidently written with a trembling hand. They speak of “*the original terms in the Greek*,” but in what other language than “the Greek” are



While I thus impugn the wisdom and propriety of the step the Committee have taken, I beg to assure your lordship that I cherish no suspicion of their motives. I believe they have acted for the best according to their judgment; that they were grieved by the original letter from India; that they hoped for a different result from the reference to the Calcutta Auxiliary; and that they have throughout been actuated by a fear of giving offence, and a desire of promoting peace. If they have had any worse motives than these, I leave that matter to their own consciences; I impute none. But they have committed, as I conceive, an error in judgment. They have made a mistake; a mistake which it is not too late, and which it can be nothing but an honour, to acknowledge, and to rectify.

They have been mistaken in supposing that the measures they have adopted would preserve peace. They have avoided offending their Auxiliary at Calcutta; but they have caused long embarrassments in their councils at home, and given serious umbrage to the Baptist denomination. The protest they have received must show them how extensively this is felt; but it does not by any means disclose to them the whole influence of their decision. That measure was one of experiment, and of hope; all ulterior measures being held in abeyance till the effect of the protest should be ascertained. The same state of suspense still continues, while, perhaps, a public discussion of the matter may be in progress, and the Committee may be in course of learning the opinions of their various constituencies throughout the country in relation to it. But already the minds of many are alienated, and the liberality of some is stayed; and no mistake can be greater than to suppose that a continued adherence of the Committee to their resolution can consist with the prolonged adhesion of the Baptist body to the Bible Society. It is possible that the Committee may not care about this. Their high patronage, their increasing funds, their established hold on the public mind, *may* lead them to say, in substance, "Let the Baptists leave us." If it should be so, it will only add one to the many instances in which those who have reached a lofty elevation have forgotten the means by which they ascended. There *was* a period when such language would not have been held. I may observe, however, that the great question to be entertained by the Bible Society is not one of wealth, but of character. Its character,

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"the original terms" in question to be found? They speak of what the term βαπτίζω implies; but this is not the point—the question is *what it means*. They tell us it does not imply, or mean, *washing* by immersion; but neither is this the point—the question is, *whether it means immersion*. They say that it does not imply, or mean, immersion *necessarily and always*; again being afraid of the force of single terms. If it does so *necessarily*, it does so *always*; and *vice versâ*. It seems to be a difficult subject for them to express themselves clearly and satisfactorily upon.

catholic and noble beyond that of any other institution, has hitherto been its wealth, and is yet of more value to it than the riches of both the Indies. It is yet worth while for it to consider whether it can afford to lose its hitherto unrivalled loveliness; to retire from its pinnacle of glory as the institution of the whole church, and shrink into one of the niches of the temple as the institution of a sect—THE PÆDOBAPTIST BIBLE SOCIETY!

The conduct of the Committee, therefore, has resembled that of some foolish parents, who, by ill-judged fondness towards a petulant child, perpetuate disturbances which their authority ought at once to have repressed. Or it may be compared to that of an unskilful practitioner, who applies palliatives to a disease which is only aggravated by their use. They should have employed a firmer hand. And it is not too late to do so. It is, indeed, more difficult now than it would have been at first; inasmuch as they would have to act in opposition, both to their Auxiliary at Calcutta, and to their own recorded sentiments at home. But still it may be done; and, with the help of public opinion, it may be done gracefully. It is for the purpose of eliciting an expression of the general sentiment that this letter to your lordship is written; and, if it should appear that the conduct of the Committee is not in accordance with that sentiment, I cannot allow myself to imagine that they will hesitate in their choice. No feeling of a private or subordinate nature will prevent them, I trust, from the prompt discharge of a public duty, although not of a nature the most agreeable. They have as yet done themselves no dishonour, since it is the lot of man to err. It will then be for them to avoid the dishonour of clinging to an error when it is known to be one, and to obtain the high distinction of gracefully and nobly rectifying a mistake.

It is to the public, therefore, through your lordship, that I make an appeal; and most truly shall I rejoice if the public shall decree that the catholicity and the unity of the British and Foreign Bible Society shall remain inviolate. If, however, it should be otherwise, and, either through apathy or opposition, this appeal should be without effect, the cause in behalf of which, as an humble but zealous advocate, I have come forward will remain without injury; and it will still be for individuals, and for public bodies, to adopt, in relation to the premises, such measures as their mature judgment may approve.

I have the honour to subscribe myself,

My Lord,

Your lordship's most obedient servant,

JOHN HOWARD HINTON.

LONDON, *Sept.* 29, 1837.

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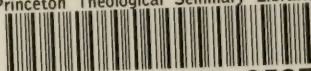
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